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# UNMASK! UNMASK!!

A PLAY OF TODAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

ARTHUR JEROME EDDY

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# *UNMASK! UNMASK!!*

A PLAY OF TODAY IN THREE ACTS.

BY

ARTHUR JEROME EDDY.

Time,—The Present.

Place,—New York.

Act I. Library in Robert Grantor's house; hour, near midnight.

Act II. Drawing Room in Robert Grantor's house; hour, five o'clock following day.

Act III. Same as Act I; hour, near midnight of same day.

## CHARACTERS.

Robert Grantor, age 64.
Dr. Hilton, age 65.
Rector of All Saints, age about 50.
Captain John Stanmore, age 30.
John, Grantor's man, age 45.
Mrs. Grantor, age 24.
Mrs. Manley, age 40.
Marie, maid.
Guests in mask at ball.

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# *UNMASK! UNMASK!!*

## ACT I.

Scene,—Library in Robert Grantor's house in New York.

Room is rather sombre in furnishings and hangings. Furniture heavy, substantial, but of an early day; book-cases massive; pictures old fashioned,—all about as one would expect in the home of a wealthy man of sixty, who has lived unmarried many years in the same house.

The doors, entrances, high ceiling, and everything about the room indicate the spacious character of the house.

Doors right and left, near rear.

Large entrance in rear center. This entrance is closed by large double doors, which swing out, and by heavy portieres of rich, dark tapestry, when drawn together these portieres cover doors.

The doors are not used in Act I, but remain swung back out of sight.

This entrance leads to a broad hall-way extending right and left, such a hallway as might run the length of a large old-fashioned house. Its walls are panelled and richly decorated.

When the portieres are parted the hall is disclosed, well, but softly lighted,—a soft, deep rose light, as if the lights were shaded for the occasion to produce a colored effect.

The light, which is soft and diffused, comes from ceiling in left of hallway, source of light not visible through entrance.

A tall, heavily ornamented clock stands in hall, against rear wall, and a little to right of center. It is visible to portion of audience only when portieres are pulled fully to each side. This clock has a rich, deep, distant strike,—very slow.

Fire place with low fire at right; an oval portrait of a dark, aristocratic man of about twenty-eight—Robert Grantor's father—hangs over mantel.

Bookcases well filled, along rear of room, at each side of entrance.

Pictures, bronzes, etc.

Sofa near fire place. It extends right and left, but with slight angle from left front to right rear, so that any one sitting on it slightly faces fire place.

Large, massive library table at left. Table extends from front to rear, but at slight angle from left front to right rear, so that any one seated behind table will have back to left side entrance, and at same time partly face audience.

Two drawers in table, one at left of any one writing, the other at right.

Drawer at left, nearest audience, is locked; key is kept in a compartment in other drawer.

Table is leather covered,—it is massively made and richly carved.

Leather covered arm chair behind table.

Two or three chairs of similar pattern in room. Sofa matches other furniture.

Writing materials, books pamphlets on table, also bronze lamp with large, heavily leaded glass shade.

The library is dimly lighted by lamp and fire in fire place.

Hour,—a little after eleven at night.

A mask ball is in progress in the house but the library is not brilliantly lighted. The guests are not supposed to make use of it. As compared with the brightly, though softly, lighted hallway, the library is comparatively dark and uninviting.

When the portieres are apart, sound of distant music is heard as indicated, and guests in mask and brilliant costumes may be seen passing to and fro.

The overture should end in a waltz, and as curtain rises the overture should die away and the same waltz be taken up without a break by musicians behind scenes and be faintly heard.

As curtain rises stage disclosed as described. Portieres are a few feet apart so that the softly lighted hall is visible.

Guests in costumes and masks pass to and fro slowly,

chatting mysteriously as people are wont to do at such functions.

After the lapse of a moment or so two of the guests, a young man and a young woman, pause at the opening and pushing the portieres back a little farther, peep into the comparatively lighted library.

YOUNG WOMAN,—How dark it is in here.

YOUNG MAN (*stepping forward a little*),—Let us go in.

YOUNG WOMAN,—No, I am afraid.

YOUNG MAN,—Of what?

YOUNG WOMAN,—Of you—ha—ha—ha.

YOUNG MAN,—You do not know me.

YOUNG WOMAN,—That is why I fear you.

YOUNG MAN (*leaning toward her*),—You would be more afraid if you did.

YOUNG WOMAN,—Perhaps. Come, we are missing the waltz.

(*They give portieres a jerk together and disappear toward left in hallway. As portieres are almost together the sound of the music is more muffled. Several seconds elapse.*

*Mrs. Manley appears suddenly at rear, pushes back one of the portieres with her right hand and looks in as if in search of some one. Seeing no one, she enters, carefully closing portieres behind her and holding them together with one hand. She again looks about the room nervously. She is in beautiful costume with mask covering eyes and part of face.*

*Seeing and hearing no one she steps quickly toward rear of library table. She bends down and tries to open*

*left drawer. It is locked. She quickly and nervously looks over table for key, when sound at right entrance causes her to straighten up quickly.*

*John enters to look after fire in fire place. He pauses, surprised, when he sees a masked woman at the writing table. He does not recognize her.*)

Mrs. M. (*nervously moving things on table,*)—I was looking for—for my—fan. Have you seen it anywhere?

John,—No, ma'am.

Mrs. M (*moving toward rear*),—I must have left it in the ball room.

(*She disappears quickly through portieres.*)

John (*as he closes portieres behind her*),—That's strange. Her voice sounded very familiar. I wonder who she is. She wasn't looking for any fan, more likely a man. These great ladies do queer things when they think they aren't known.

(*John stirs up fire and goes out—right.*)

(*Enter Dr. Hilton at rear. He pauses between portieres and motions to Rector to come. As he stands there the soft light from hall falls full on him, and sounds of music are a little plainer. As he stands waiting, Mrs. Grantor, in mask, passes at rear, throws him a kiss, then takes a flower from her corsage, tosses it to him and passes on to right with a wave of her hand. The doctor's gaze follows her. He is puzzled; does not recognize her. He puts flower in button-hole.*

*Doctor comes forward, followed by Rector, who appears at entrance from left in hall.*)

Dr. H.,—Whew! It is a relief to get away from the jam.

Rector,—Very decidedly. But it is a brilliant ball. The most gorgeous thing of the kind I have ever attended. I suppose everybody is heah.

(*The Rector is a fashionable clergyman, the head of an aristocratic church, very polished, suave, and tactful, cuts his r's a little like a southerner. The doctor is more direct and forceful, a rank sceptic and cynic, yet he and the Rector are fairly good friends, notwithstanding he looks upon the latter's attitude as mostly a "pose."*)

Dr. H.,—I dare say, but so far I haven't been able to recognize a soul, not even our hostess.

Rector (*shaking his finger at the doctor*).—Nor the charming young woman who threw you the flower, and with it a kiss?

Dr. H. (*slowly*),—Probably one of my patients. (*He has put flower in button hole.*)

Rector (*smiling*),—Let us be charitable and hope so.

Dr. H.,—But hang it man, you don't suppose any one else would dare—

Rector,—My experience is that men and women dare do anything behind a mask.

Dr. H.,—Well, you ought to know, for you preach every Sunday to a lot of masks. Have a cigar?

(*He takes case from his pocket.*)

Rector (*raising his hand in protest*),—Thank you, I do not smoke, you know.

Dr. H.,—Gad, I forgot. Most preachers do now-a-days whether they like to or not. Makes them look worldly and helps them get a firmer grip on sinners.

(*Doctor lights his cigar and as he lights it asks shortly*),—Play billiards?

Rector,—I am very fond of billiards.

Dr. H.,—Cards?

Rector,—When it is necessary to accommodate others by making a fourth hand.

Dr. H.,—Wine?

Rector,—Occasionally, only occasionally.

Dr. H.,—You'll do, you'll get on, but with all those qualifications you might as well smoke,—in this world I mean (*the doctor laughs at his little joke*).

Rector,—If your theories are correct, no one runs any risk of smoking in the hereafter;—you deny a future life.

Dr. H.,—For your sake,—and mine, and (*he sweeps his hand in the direction of the hall, as if embracing guests he had in mind*) a good many other sinners here tonight, let us hope that I am right.

Rector (*smiling benignly*),—That is rather a sweeping (*he imitates the doctor's gesture*) remark. I have more confidence in human nature. I should say there are many here tonight who need have no fears regarding the hereafter.

Dr. H.,—Bah! It is your business to allay those fears, to make them think they are good, to lull them to sleep in the midst of their sins.

Rector (*with dignity*),—It is my business to try and *make* them good.

Dr. H.,—Let me tell you you have some pretty stubborn and rotten material to work on. I know your

people fairly well. While you are wrestling with their moral side I am doing my best to patch up their physical. If you could see them as they really are—ugh! (*The doctor holds up his hand in disgust*).

Rector,—But there are exceptions—

Dr. H. (*interrupting dryly*),—Very few.

Rector (*with enthusiasm*),—Take Robert Grantor, himself, what a man he is! verily one of the salt of the earth. (*As the Rector speaks, the doctor eyes him with a curious expression*). No man in the city does more good. No man stands higher. A pillar of the church. A citizen without reproach. You surely would not include him in your sweeping condemnation? (*The Rector looks at the doctor triumphantly. The latter puffs vigorously at his cigar without replying for a time.*)

Dr. H. (*slowly*),—As the world goes, I suppose Grantor is as good as the average.

Rector (*enthusiastically*),—Better, doctor, better. He is one man in a thousand.

Dr. H. (*with seeming indifference, as he takes the cigar from his mouth and rolls it between his fingers, looking at it meditatively*),—How long have you known Grantor?

Rector,—Ever since I came to the city.

Dr. H. (*reckoning the time*),—You have been here, let me see, about five years?

Rector,—Five years next June. He is one of my vestrymen, you know.

Dr. H. (*dryly*),—Yes, yes. It is a wise clergyman who knoweth his own vestrymen.

Rector (*with some asperity*),—I can only repeat, Robert Grantor is an exceptional man,—a very remarkable man.

Dr. H. (*assenting emphatically to the last remark*),—You are right, he is a remarkable man. I have known him for thirty-odd years.

Rector,—Then there is no need for me to sing his praises to you.

Dr. H.,—No,—It is quite unnecessary. (*There is something in the doctor's manner which puzzles the Rector, and for a moment or two nothing is said. The doctor once more puffs away vigorously, blowing clouds of smoke toward ceiling.*)

Doctor,—Do you know how long it takes to know a man?

Rector,—Why, I should say that one might—(*he hesitates*)

Dr. H.,—Three thousand years are all too short. In a hundred generations you may find his principal traits, but there will still remain in his character hidden recesses to which only generations still more remote supply the key.

(*Again there is a moment's silence.*)

Dr. H. (*abruptly*),—What do you think of Grantor's marriage?

Rector (*surprised*),—Why, a most happy union. I performed the ceremony myself.

Dr. H. (*impatiently*),—I know, I know, but he is forty years older than his wife. She is a girl. He is an old man.

Rector,—Not so very old, not so very old. Just turned sixty, and a wonderfully well preserved man.

Dr. H.,—That is where the physician comes in. It is our business to fight the ravages of age,—especially where a man has a young wife.

Rector,—They seem very happy.

Dr. H.,—How about a few years hence. She will be in her prime, as a woman, when he is a decrepit old man. She will feel all the overwhelming impulses of youth when he is powerless to keep pace with her. She will crave life, love, pleasure, and he will hang like a mill-stone about her neck.

Rector (*rather tamely*),—You do not believe then in such marriages?

Dr. H.,—No, nor should you. I have seen too much of the evil consequences, of the bodily and mental disorders which follow. What right has age to suck like a vampire, the warm, red blood of youth?

Rector,—But if they love each other—

Dr. H. (*vehemently*),—It is not love. It is mere animal passion in its most degrading form. It is not the longing of the normal man for the companionship of a woman of his own age. It has nothing of that fine sympathy between two beings which is the foundation of love. It is the animal craving of the old and worn-out man for a young, fresh and innocent victim,—for the blood of a girl. The fairer, the sweeter, the younger she is, the more completely does she satisfy his unnatural lust.

Rector,—Are you not rather severe? Surely you would not include our host and hostess?

Dr. H.,—I was thinking of the many ill-mated couples which have come under my own observation. I do not know of an instance which has not resulted, soon or late, unhappily. For a time there is an outward show of happiness, but it is all a sham, a pretense.

Rector,—I am afraid you are a pessimist, doctor. It strikes me Mr. and Mrs. Grantor are as happily married as any two people in New York.

Dr. H. (*dryly*),—That is not saying much.

Rector (*smiling*),—Then let me say as happily united as any two people I know.

Dr. H. (*bluntly*),—Your knowledge of human nature may be superficial.

Rector (*resuming the tone of the doctor's remarks*), —I fancy it is as deep as that of most men who wish to see the good in people rather than the bad.

Dr. H.,—That's just it. One can't see the good without the bad. In fact it is through the bad that one sees and understands the good, the really good. What you call good in people is a sort of a halo which your imagination spreads about their devoted heads. The worst of them are better than you think. But, let me tell you, the best of them, with all the goodness they really possess, are damned bad.

(*The doctor has risen as he spoke. As he finishes he tosses the cigar in the fire, and they prepare to leave the room. A gay masker puts her head through the portieres, glances in, then withdraws her head suddenly and disappears. Sounds of music faintly heard.*)

Dr. H. (*pausing in center and pointing towards open-*

*ing where masker had looked in*),—Did you know that woman, Rector?

Rector,—No, she wore a mask—

Dr. H.,—Well, we all wear masks, every one of us. You wear a mask. I wear one. Now and then our masks are lifted a little and we think we know each other, but we do not. Life is one long mask, and most of us are lucky enough to mystify the world even in death; but now and then something happens, some fibre of our being yields under the strain of this long career of sham and hypocrisy, the mask falls away and our real nature, our innermost being stands forth revealed in all its hideous deformity. We are known and recognized for what we are.

Rector,—I have more confidence in human nature.

Dr. H.,—Think as well of it as you please—that is part of your profession, but let me tell you the mask man wears is about all that divides him from the brutes.

(*They go out rear and disappear toward left, leaving the portieres about a foot apart. Music faintly heard.*

*Mrs. Grantor enters quickly, followed by Capt. Stanmore. She is nervous. Both are masked and in costume.*)

Mrs. G. (*trying to speak lightly, but her voice shows her nervousness*),—But I tell you, you do not know me, you are mistaken.

Capt. S. (*intensely*),—Mistaken in that voice, those lips, the eyes which shine so brightly through that mask. I would know you if your back was turned and you did not speak. Take off the mask.

(*He removes his with a sudden gesture.*)

Mrs. G. (*putting out her hand to stop him, but too late*),—No, no, you must not. It is not time. At midnight we all unmask.

Capt. S.,—But it lacks so little of the hour. There is no one here. Will you not take it off for just a minute, Alice?

Mrs. G. (*shaking her head slowly, and speaking in a low voice*),—You must not call me by that name. I am not Alice,—not the Alice you think I am, but a woman, a very old woman who has almost forgotten when she was a girl.

Capt. S.,—Do not try to deceive me. I recognized you before I had been in the house a half hour.

Mrs. G.,—A half hour! That is a long time. My disguise must be better than I thought.

Capt. S.,—It is the dress, the way your hair is done—

Mrs. G.,—But my eyes, my voice,—I thought you said you knew every feature.

Capt. S.,—And so I do, but—

Mrs. G. (*interrupting*),—For a whole half hour I passed to and fro before your searchnig gaze and you knew me not. Be not too sure now, for I tell you, I am not the Alice you think I am.

Capt. S.,—Once you were Alice—

Mrs. C. (*as if recalling a time long past*),—Yes, once, —years ago they used to call me Alice, but then I was a child, now (*with a gesture of resignation*), now I am an old married woman. The Alice you knew is dead; the woman to whom you are speaking you do not know.

Capt. S. (*sadly*),—True, I may not know you now, but I knew you once, and not so very long ago—a few short years. Then you were free and listened to me when I spoke of love. You did not wear a mask—

Mrs. G. (*interrupting*),—Who knows? Who can say when we are masked and when we are not? A moment ago you wore that bit of silk. It did not disguise you. I could see through that, but now (*she looks at him intently and slowly shakes her head*) the mask you wear I cannot see through; it hides your face; it covers even your eyes.

Capt. S. (*puzzled*),—I do not understand you.

Mrs. G.,—Nor I. I do not understand myself. I have had so many queer fancies and feelings tonight. As I moved about among my guests it seemed at times as if they were not disguised. I could not call a dozen by name, and yet I felt as if I knew them all for the first time, and once,—once when I suddenly came face to face with my husband who is not in costume, it seemed as if he was the only person in the room who wore a mask. He did not know me, but through his mask I could see his eyes and feel his searching gaze. He passed on secure in his disguise. The man behind the mask I did not know. Again when I met the Rector, he, too, wore a mask, such a smooth and complacent mask, but back of the suave and unctious exterior I felt there was a person I had never met, one I had not invited to my ball, one, perhaps, I would not have asked if I had really known him; he, too, moved on secure in his disguise.

Capt. S.,—I have hardly met the Rector, but I do

not care for him. There is one other man here not in costume.

Mrs. G.,—Yes, Dr. Hilton. He, too, wears a mask, but wears it so carelessly and indifferently, one can almost see the real man. His mask is nearly transparent. I like him, don't you?

Capt. S.,—Very much, a plain, blunt man; he would have made a good soldier.

Mrs. G.,—He is my best friend.

Capt. S.,—If every face is a mask in itself, why wear that piece of silk? According to your theory it is no disguise.

Mrs. G.,—No,—that is why I like to wear it. That is why I gave this ball, to throw off the mask I am obliged to wear every day of my life and be for one short evening a girl again, to be free to dance, to sing, to laugh, to shout, to be (*fiercely and pathetically*) myself.

Capt. S.,—But will you not unmask for me for just a moment?

Mrs. G.,—No, it is not time, it is not midnight. I have yet a half hour of freedom, of life, of joy. It is like being an invisible elf. No one knows me. My own husband does not know me. Come! Put on your mask. We will play our parts until the clock strikes twelve, and then— (*she pauses significantly*)

Capt. S. (*stepping close to her*),—and then—

Mrs. G. (*lightly*),—Why then, like Cinderella, I will return to my ashes.

Capt. S. (*stepping closer and seizing her hand*),—

Does that mean that at midnight you will unmask your real self and let me know you once more as the woman, the girl I love?

Mrs. G. (*drawing back*),—No, no, never again. That girl is dead.

Capt. S.,—Not dead, but hiding behind the mask you wear as the wife of a man you do not love—

Mrs. G. (*putting her hand over his mouth*),—Stop, stop, you must not say that. It is not fair. You are here in his house as his guest as well as mine. You must play the game according to the rules,—and help me to do so too,—(*appealingly*). You will, won't you?

(*She holds out her hand. He bends over and kisses it, then replaces his mask.*)

Mrs. G.,—There, we may be missed. Let us return.

Capt. S.,—But will you give me a few moments later, just a few moments by ourselves? Remember it is four years since I have seen you.

Mrs. G. (*slowly, with an effort*),—It seems longer than that,—much longer.

Capt. S. (*earnestly*),—Will you meet me here again?

(*He has stepped closer to her and taken her hand in both of his. At that moment Grantor enters at left. They do not hear him. He pauses near door on seeing them. He does not know his wife in mask and costume. Music faintly heard.*)

Mrs. G. (*drawing back and catching her breath, but he does not release her hands*),—Yes, there, now let us go.

Capt. S. (*drawing her close to him*),—But when, tell me when.

Mrs. G.,—At midnight.

Capt. S.,—And you will take off your mask?

Mrs. G.,—Not my mask, remember, not my life mask, but only this bit of silk.

(*They disappear through portieres. Grantor goes quickly to portieres, holds one back and gazes down hall at left in the direction they have gone. The light falls full on his face.*

*He has almost white hair, bushy eyebrows, and a closely cropped grey moustache. Pale face, good features, but there is a cold and cynical expression about the eyes and mouth. He has a manner of looking at people from under his shaggy eyebrows as if he had little confidence in them. At the same time he has the faculty of quickly changing his expression and appearing open and frank. In this first act his self control is extraordinary, it is the control of a man whose life has been strangely spent, whose impulses are wholly bad, and who realizes the necessity of maintaining at all times the pose he has assumed.*

*As he peers down the hallway he shakes his head and compresses his lips firmly.*

*He turns back toward center, letting portieres fall together. Music ceases. At that moment Dr. Hilton enters at right.*)

G.,—These balls are the invention of the devil.

Dr. H. (*shortly*),—Why?

G.,—Because when a woman puts on a mask she lays aside all decency.

Dr. H.,—The old story, the more we wear, the less we conceal.

G.,—Only a moment ago I came in here and surprised a man making love to a woman, probably the wife of another.

Dr. H.,—Quite likely. A man would hardly take the trouble to get himself up like a fool to make love to his own wife.

G.,—It is a good deal like turning the house into a resort for questionable characters.

Dr. H.,—The characters are the same whether in costume or not. You cannot alter a man by dressing him as a prince, or a woman by giving her the robes of a queen. They remain the same. What they do tonight under cover of their disguises, most of them will do more openly tomorrow. On the whole, I think the mask is an additional obstacle,—slight, to be sure, but still an obstacle.

G.,—Bah! It makes the man more bold, and only serves to hide a woman's blushes.

Dr. H.,—You speak as if from experience.

G. (*his face works strangely for a moment, before he replies, as if he were recalling many experiences. His lips move, he half nods his head, and he peers sidewise at the doctor from under his heavy eyebrows*),—I know what these balls are, and I never went to one with any decent end in view.

Dr. H.,—Then why did you permit your wife to give this?

G.,—A woman's whim, a girl's fancy. She was bound to do it. A man can't deny a young wife everything.

Dr. H. (*meditatively*),—No, you are right there. If

an old man marries a child he cannot expect her to put away childish things at once.

G. (*resenting the doctor's tone*),—She is no child.

Dr. H.,—Scarcely more,—twenty-three or four.

G.,—And I—I'm not an old man yet.

Dr. H. (*in the same tone*),—No—sixty-three, or four, a matter of only forty years between you.

G. (*biting his words off*),—See here, Hilton, why are you always reminding me of this difference in ages.

Dr. H.,—Am I not your medical adviser?

G.,—Well, what the devil has that to do with the matter?

Dr. H.,—Much, my old friend, much. For nearly forty years I have had you in hand, doing my best to keep you a going concern, so to speak. I carried you through the ills and vicissitudes of bachelorhood, cured the consequences of your follies, repaired as best I could the ravages of your vices. I thought the fires of youth had exhausted themselves, but just as I was congratulating myself in the belief that you were tired out, played out, worn out, and I would have a well-earned rest, you take it into your head to marry and like most old men whose lives have been spent in dissipation, you marry a child—pardon me, a mature woman of nineteen, and once more I am compelled to take off my coat and resume work on the rotten old hulk.

G.,—Look here, Hilton, that's going just a little too far. You and I are good friends. We know each other

pretty well. But there are some things I won't stand from even you.

Dr. H.,—You can choose another physician whenever you see fit.

G. (*alarmed at the doctor's suggestion*),—No. no, I did not mean that. I did not mean that, Hilton. I don't want another doctor. Why, damn it, man, you've always looked after me. You know me. You know me better than any man living.

Dr. H.,—And it is because I know you that I speak plainly. I warned you against this marriage.

G.,—But it hasn't done me any harm. I never felt better in my life.

Dr. H.,—But it has done her harm. Every nerve in her body is wracked, she is on the verge of a collapse. You have violated nature, you have prostituted youth to age. Without knowing it she is suffering all the miseries of a woman whose natural longings for children, for a home, for a family, can never be satisfied. In the end you will kill her. Mind you, she may not die, but none the less you will kill her,—the woman in her.

G.,—You don't know what you are talking about, Hilton. I do everything I can. I indulge her every whim and fancy. Why, she's as happy as a child. Look at this house tonight, filled with a lot of people, dressed like idiots.

Dr. H.,—That is just it; to you and me this is all child's play; to her it is fairy land. Age makes all the difference in the world in the way we look at these pleasures. You say you indulge her every whim,—as

a doting old man humors a spoiled child, not with the fine sympathy of a husband with his wife's tastes. You two have nothing in common, absolutely nothing, save the name you gave her. How that pure, sweet girl came to marry you, you of all men, I do not understand.

G. (*his lips working, and looking at the doctor sidewise from under his eyebrows, a peculiar and characteristic expression, almost furtive. He says shortly*), —She loved me.

Dr. H.,—She loved you! Don't deceive yourself with any such notion.

G. (*harshly*),—I tell you she loved me.

Dr. H. (*slowly*),—If I thought that girl loved you when she married you, or that she loves you now, I should lose all faith in woman nature. If we could probe the secret depths of her soul, shall I tell you what we would find? We would find that every womanly instinct revolts against you.

G. (*harshly and with anger*),—You have said enough. You take advantage of the fact we are old friends and you are my physician.

Dr. H.,—I said all I could to dissuade you from marrying.

G.,—Yes, and you have said enough. I am married and that's the end of it.

Dr. H. (*earnestly*),—No, it is not the end of it, Grantor. I tell you that she is on the verge of a nervous crisis. She may go to pieces any day. Even now she is hardly responsible for what she does. While you,—well, I have told you your condition, I have warned you.

G. (*alarmed, and patting the doctor on the arm, as if to assure himself of the latter's strength and support*),—Yes, yes, Hilton, I know, I know, but I am better, I am better, only the other day you said I was better,—don't you remember?

Dr. H.,—That was after ten days rest in the country. It is rest you need after the life you have led, and if you wish to prolong your years you must have rest,—alone, mind you,—alone.

G.,—But man, I can't live alone. A man might as well die as live alone.

Dr. H.,—Then you can make up your mind to die, and die some day or some night, very suddenly, unless—(*the doctor pauses and eyes Grantor critically*)

G. (*appalled and frightened*),—Unless what,—what, what? Why the devil don't you speak?

Dr. H.,—Unless you suffer some sudden shock and lose your mind,—that is the frightful possibility which confronts you.

G. (*agitated, but struggling against his fears*),—He—ha—ha (*the queer laugh dies away and he pauses suddenly, eyeing the doctor with his peculiar, cunning and suspicious glance*) you are trying to frighten me, Hilton, you are trying to frighten me (*he slaps the doctor on the shoulder two or three times*). I know you,—ha—ha—ha, for forty years you have been trying to frighten me, but I'm alive yet (*he straightens up*), I'm alive yet. I'm good for twenty years.

Dr. H.,—Twenty years—umph—I would not insure your life for twenty-four hours.

G. (*startled*),—Eh—what's that? twenty-four hours!

Why, I haven't felt so well in years as I feel tonight. Look at me, look at me! (*He throws his shoulders back with an effort.*)

Dr. H.,—It is your indomitable will which keeps you going in the face of the world, but your life has been one long sham, it is a pose now, and to play the part to the end without betraying yourself is more than even you can do.

G. (*after a moment, during which his lips and eyebrows work nervously, he draws a long breath and replies more restlessly*),—I'll take my chances. A man has but one life to live—

(*Enter Rector at rear. Grantor pauses suddenly.*)

Dr. H. (*grimly*),—Mr. Grantor was just remarking, Rector, that a man has but one life to live; what do you say to that?

Rector (*suavely*),—In this world, that is quite true—

G.,—And that is what I meant.

(*The doctor shrugs his shoulders.*)

Rector,—I have been looking everywhere for Mrs. Grantor and cannot discover her. Can you not give me a hint, a clew, just an idea what she is wearing?

G.,—I do not know, myself. She kept her costume a secret. She did say something about a blue dress.

Rector,—But there are so many blue dresses. Did she say a very pale blue silk with velvet bodice and—

Dr. H.,—You have in mind the woman with pearls, whose gown is cut so shockingly low,—I have seen her myself; it is not Mrs. Grantor, I can assure you.

Rector (*confused*),—Believe me, I had not noticed.

Dr. H. (*smiling*),—The velvet bodice?

G.,—It is nearly midnight and they will soon unmask.

Rector,—I shall then be able to congratulate Mrs. Grantor on the success of her ball. It is most brilliant, most brilliant. It will be, I am sure, the talk of the city. Ah! What a source of satisfaction it must be to be able to give pleasure to so many—so many (*he hesitates for a word*).

Dr. H. (*mimicking the Rector's lofty manner*),—Deserving people, you were about to say—

Rector,—No,—no, that is not just the thought.

Dr. H.,—It was not the thought, but it is the phrase.

Rector,—By the way, Mr. Grantor, if you will pardon my referring to the work of the parish on an occasion so convivial; I wish to inform you I have taken the liberty of proposing your name for chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Home for Erring Women. It is a work which I am sure will appeal to you. (*The doctor covertly looks at Grantor and by a slight gesture betrays his enjoyment of the situation.*)

G. (*a little confused, and glancing furtively in the direction of the doctor, who avoids his looks*),—I—I—It seems to me there must be others better fitted for the work—

Rector (*eagerly*),—No, no, there is not a man in the city so well equipped to further this great enterprise. Do you not agree with me, doctor?

Dr. H. (*dryly*),—Why, yes, I should say our host is peculiarly qualified for such a position.

Rector (*to Grantor*),—There, you see, there is no escape. We must have a man whose character and standing are such that these unfortunate creatures will recognize—

Dr. H. (*interrupting, still more dryly*),—Better leave out the recognition,—that might be awkward.

G. (*hastily*),—I shall consider the matter, Rector. Perhaps the chairmanship of the Board of Foreign Missions which you mentioned the other day would be better.

Dr. H.,—Decidedly better, since the heathen are too far away to recognize their benefactors.

G. (*to Rector*),—Suppose we go into the dining room and find something to drink. Will you come with us, doctor?

Dr. H.,—No, I shall remain here and have a smoke. I am tired.

G.,—You will find some cigars on the mantel there.

(*Rector and Grantor go out left.*

*The doctor takes a cigar from tray on mantel, cuts end, lights it. He is lost in thought as he takes cigar, and while cutting and lighting it he pauses now and then and remains perfectly still as if absorbed in his reflections. Once or twice he shakes his head slowly, purses his lips and then moves them as if muttering angrily. Before sitting down he stands for a few seconds leaning on mantel, and when he does drop down on sofa he lets his hand holding the cigar fall on the arm of the sofa and he drops his head forward, slowly exhaling a mouthful of smoke.*

*Mrs. Grantor, with mask, appears at rear and puts*

*her head through portieres. She looks all about, then catches a glimpse of the doctor's stiff grey hair, and sees the small cloud of smoke. She smiles, presses her fingers to her lips, then tiptoes to behind the doctor, and before he has an opportunity to turn his head she puts her hands over his eyes, holding him fast. He, of course, recognizes her, but exclaims*)

Dr. H.,—A princess?

(*She shakes her head and his and makes a negative exclamation in shrill, disguised voice.*)

Dr. H.,—A queen?

(*Again she shakes his head and makes sound as before.*)

Dr. H.,—An empress.

(*She shakes his head, but releases him.*)

Mrs. G. (*laughing*),—No, only a poor little girl.

Dr. H. (*rising*),—In silks and satins and jewels.

Mrs. G.,—But none the less a poor little girl. (*She comes about sofa to front.*) I knew it was you from the cloud of smoke. You are always like a chimney afire. I am so tired. I am glad to rest a few minutes. (*She drops down on sofa beside the doctor.*) And I am going to take off this horrid mask for just a second. (*She looks about apprehensively.*) Where is Robert?

Dr. H.,—Oh, you are safe. He and the Rector have gone to the dining room.

Mrs. G. (*with a mischievous smile*),—He doesn't know me. I have passed him dozens of times, and once I spoke to him.

Dr. H.,—He thinks you are dressed in blue.

Mrs. G.,—I said that to throw him off the track. Oh, it is such fun to be among your friends and have them talk to you without knowing you.

Dr. H.,—Has no one recognized you?

Mrs. G.—No,—(*she hesitates*) that is, not for sure. I have not had this mask off until now.

Dr. H.,—But your voice, your mouth, your lips, I am sure I should have found you out if I had—

Mrs. G.,—But you didn't know me, and once I stood within so far (*she spreads her hands apart*) looking straight at you and you did not know me. You did not knew me when I threw you a kiss and tossed you that flower.

Dr. H. (*shaking his finger at her*),—But I suspected, I suspected who it was. No other woman would be so bold.

Mrs. G.,—Oh, yes, dozens of them. We are bolder than lions when disguised. Strange how little it takes (*she twirls mask about her finger*) to hide us from our best friends.

Dr. H. (*thoughtfully*),—That is truer than you think, but often the disguises we rely upon turn out to be transparent, and we are betrayed. (*He looks at her keenly.*) You look tired. Are you feeling well?

Mrs. G.,—Yes,—only at times my head bothers me, —there is a dull ache here (*she puts her hand at the back of her head just above the neck*).

Dr. H. (*looking at her gravely and shaking his head*),—You need rest and quiet.

Mrs. G. (*with a smile*),—Why, that is what you are all the time telling Robert.

Dr. H. (*gruffly*),—You both need it. Do you know there are times when it is a good thing for a wife to get away from her husband, to leave him alone and be alone herself.

Mrs. G.,—But not when he is sick. That is the time he needs her.

Dr. H.,—A wife makes a poor nurse. (*She shakes her head. He continues.*) I do not like that feeling in the back of the head of which you complain. It shows you are nervously exhausted. Unless you get rest it may mean a collapse. Let me warn you in time. You must have rest, rest—(*he emphasized the word*).

Mrs. G. (*lightly*),—Then after tonight I promise to be good, but tonight, tonight (*she rises and puts on her mask*) is mine and I shall do as I please. (*Her voice suddenly changes.*) Oh, doctor, you don't know what it is to step from reality into dream-land, from life into the realms of fancy, to see moving about the kings and queens and princes from the tales that were told us as children. They are all here, all, all. I have looked into their eyes, I have heard their voices, I have felt the warm pressure of their hands. They have spoken to me and I have called them by name. I know them every one. They are all here,—no (*she presses her finger to her lips and half whispers, her voice, which has been half pathetic, becoming lighter*) no,—not every one. The prince who awakened the sleeping beauty with a kiss, he is not here.

Dr. H. (*smiling and shaking his head*),—Beware! he may be looking for you even now.

(*As the doctor says this Capt. Stanmore appears at rear and looks in through portieres. Mrs. G. turns suddenly, sees him, starts, and gives a little exclamation, which causes the doctor, who has not seen the captain, to look at her. The captain disappears.*)

Dr. H.,—What is the matter?

Mrs. G.,—Nothing,—nothing, I thought I saw—

Dr. H. (*laughing*),—The missing prince.

Mrs. G. (*in slow voice*),—Yes. (*She looks nervously toward portieres. The doctor looks at her keenly.*)

Dr. H.,—Be careful. You are excited and nervous. I shall be glad when this ball is over.

Mrs. G.,—And I wish it would never end. (*Sounds of waltz heard.*) There, I am engaged for this waltz. Listen, listen. Is it not intoxicating? (*Her body moves unconsciously to the dreamy rhythm of the music.*) It thrills every fibre. It sets me wild. I am no longer myself, but another being in another world. There, you think me foolish, don't you? But remember, we are in fairyland tonight, where there are no doctors, and no one is ever sick.

(*She disappears through portieres. The doctor watches her, stands silent a moment, rolling his cigar in his fingers meditatively.*)

Dr. H.,—Umph! And that fair young creature filled with the impulses of youth, filled with the poetry of life is the wife of Robert Grantor. Faugh!

(*Doctor goes out, right. Stage left deserted for*

*sufficient time for audience to feel the tension. Lamp on table burns low. Music of waltz heard faintly.*

*Mrs. Manley again appears at portieres and looks in furtively as she did before. As lamp on table burns low, stage is a little darker. She steps in quickly, carefully drawing portieres behind her. She stands still, listening. Hearing no sound, she goes quickly to table, passes around it to drawer on left side. Her back is to door at left. She bends over and tries the drawer. It is locked. She straightens up a little, again listens, then begins a quick search for key, looking drawer at right, which is not locked. She finds key and proceeds to try it in drawer. As she is working at drawer, Grantor appears at door behind her, pauses astonished, and watches her a second, then as she gets drawer open and seizes a package of letters, he steps quickly forward, grasps her tightly by the wrist. She gives a little scream, and drops the letters in drawer. She straightens up and turns her face away a little. He looks at her closely, but does not recognize her behind her mask.*)

G. (*hoarsely*),—Who are you and what are you doing here?

(*He still holds her firmly by the wrist. She hesitates a moment, then throwing her head back, she pulls off her mask defiantly.*)

G. (*letting go her wrist and starting back in amazement*),—Grace Manley, you here tonight. I thought you were in Japan.

Mrs. M. (*coolly*),—And so I was, but returned just in time for your ball.

G.,—Does my wife know that you are here ?

Mrs. M.,—No, I came with friends.

G. (*nervously*),—But it is nearly midnight.

Mrs. M. (*contemptuously*),—The same coward, afraid of your shadow. You need not worry. I shall go before they unmask. I have no desire to be seen by all these people in your house. I am not afraid to meet your wife, but there are others here who know us better than she does.

G.,—What are you doing here?

(*He gives one of his peculiarly furtive glances toward the drawer, which is partly open.*)

Mrs. M.,—Yooking for my letters? I came to get them.

G. (*quickly*),—They are burned. I destroyed them.

Mrs. M.,—You lie. You have boasted to me, you never destroyed any evidence of a woman's weakness. You keep them to read and gloat over. They are in that drawer.

G.,—I tell you they are not. Look at the package you picked up. Is that your handwriting?

(*He takes packet of letters from drawer and hands it to her. She looks at the address on the uppermost envelope.*)

Mrs. M. (*shaking her head*),—No, it is not mine, but it is the handwriting of some unhappy woman who has loved you and been made miserable. I can see her wretchedness in every character. I can feel it through the very folds of the paper.

(*She holds the letters a little from her in something*

*like fear and horror. He grabs them; thrusts them in the drawer and pushes it in with a quick shove. Her words and manner have made him feel afraid.*)

G.,—Anyway they are not yours.

Mrs. M.,—But mine are in there somewhere. I remember where you used to keep them, and I intend to have them. (*She makes a motion toward the drawer, but he restrains her.*).

G.,—I tell you they are burned. I destroyed them long ago.

Mrs. M.,—I do not believe you, Robert Grantor, I would not believe you under oath. Your tongue is false, your whole life is a lie.

(*A noise at door at right.*)

G.,—Careful, some one is coming, your mask.

(*Mrs. M. hastily holds her mask over her face and moves a little to one side.*

*John enters at right, and pauses when he sees them.*)

John (*coolly*),—I beg your pardon, sir, but madam was looking for her fan here a few moments ago.

(*John's tone shows he suspects Mrs. M.'s good faith and he wishes to warn Grantor.*

*Grantor eyes Mrs. M. suspiciously.*)

Mrs. M. (*self-possessed*),—Yes, I was quite sure I left my fan on the table.

G.,—You see, it is not here. Look for it in the ball room, John. (*Turning toward Mrs. M. enquiringly, but the slightly veiled sneer in his voice shows his little faith in the fan story.*) It is a—

Mrs. M. (*coolly and quickly*),—Red fan.

G.,—With—?

Mrs. M.,—Sticks of tortoise shell. (*She bows to him as she says this.*)

G. (*to John, who fully appreciates the play, but is stolidity itself*),—Remember, John, a red fan with sticks of tortoise shell.

John,—Shall I bring it here, sir?

G. (*with significance*),—If you are so fortunate as to find that particular fan, you may bring it to me, and I will do myself the honor of returning it to the lady in mask. You may go.

(*John goes out, right.*)

G.,—So you have been here before, this evening.

Mrs. M. (*defiantly*),—Yes, and I shall come again, if not tonight, then tomorrow. I shall not rest until every scrap of paper which you have of mine is destroyed. (*Then pleadingly and approaching him.*) Oh, I beg of you, give them to me. They are of no use to you. You are married, and if any one should see them, it would mean ruin for me.

G. (*very earnestly*),—I am telling you the truth, Grace, they are destroyed, every one.

Mrs. M.,—Then why not let me look through that drawer? You used to keep them there.

G.,—Because (*he hesitates*)—because there are papers there which I do not wish you or any one else to see.

Mrs. M. (*laughing harshly*),—Do you think so trivial a thing as a lock will hide the secrets of a man's life? Do you think you can keep hidden the records of

your career? Even though you burn them, the very ashes will speak (*her hand makes a gesture toward the grate and her voice is almost a hiss in its intensity as she utters the final words*).

G. (*harshly*),—There is no need discussing my life. The world—

Mrs. M. (*laughing ironically*),—The world, the world, the world; you were always successful in deceiving the world,—the flesh you never tried to deceive, the devil you can't deceive.

G.,—It will be just as well if we both forget the past.

Mrs. M.,—Forget the past! Can you forget yourself? You are your past. Your present is but the realization of your past. Your marriage is simply another woman added to your past. Do you dream the future has aught in store for you? No. no. The Robert Grantor you might have been, died so long ago, you cannot remember him. There is yet hope for me, for I am younger, with some instincts of decency which you did not kill; but for a man like you there is no future,—your life is done.

G. (*as he hears voices at rear outside portieres*),—Sh—sh —

(*She hastily adjusts her mask as Rector and doctor enter, talking in animated manner. Portieres are left partly open behind them. When they see Grantor and Mrs. M.—whom they do not recognize—they come to a standstill.*)

G. (*slightly embarrassed*),—Come in, come in, Rector. Let me present—(*he pauses suddenly as Mrs. M. puts her fingers to his lips*)

Mrs. M. (*entirely self-possessed*),—Mr. Grantor forgets I am in mask and unknown.

Rector (*gallantly*),—But if he is privileged, why keep us in darkness?

Mrs. M.,—One's host is always privileged. Besides, Mr. Grantor and I are such old friends I could hardly hope to deceive him.

Dr. H. (*looking at her keenly but failing to recall her*),—I thought I knew his friends.

Mrs. M.,—Not all, doctor. Mr. Grantor is a man of so many attachments, with so many interests—

Rector (*enthusiastically*),—You are quite right. There is no man in the city more devoted to the welfare of the people about him. Only tonight I have persuaded him to accept the chairmanship of the Board of Trustees for the Home for—

Dr. H.,—Ahem—ahem.

Rector (*confused, coughs, then recovers himself, and continues as if he had finished naming the Home for Erring Women*),—a most worthy charity.

Mrs. M.,—I am sure Mr. Grantor would not permit his name to be associated with anything of an unworthy character.

G. (*hastily*),—I told you I should consider your suggestion, Rector. I have not yet made up my mind. (*He looks toward opening in portieres. Several maskers are passing hall. He continues wearily.*) Is it not time to unmask?

Dr. H. (*looking at watch*),—It lacks a little of midnight.

Rector,—But so little that I am sure you (*he gallantly addresses Mrs. M.*) will favor us and remove yours.

Mrs. M. (*shaking her head at first, then suddenly, as if a thought occurred to her*),—Yes, I will remove mine on one condition.

Rector,—And that is?

Mrs. M.,—That Mr. Grantor will remove his.

(*The doctor smiles.*)

Rector (*mystified, looking toward Grantor*),—But Mr. Grantor is wearing no mask.

Mrs. M.,—Are you sure? Look again.

(*The Rector looks and shakes his head as if at a loss to understand her joke.*)

Mrs. M. (*turning to the doctor*),—And, doctor, what do you say?

Dr. H. (*forcefully*),—That every man wears a mask, even our worthy rector, here.

Rector (*thinking he comprehends, and laughing*),—That's not bad, doctor; I see, I see. We all have our masks, of course, of course, but in the case of our host here, I am sure you will agree that if he wears a disguise it is to hide the good deeds he does.

(*While the others have been speaking, Grantor has walked toward the table. He stands behind it nervously, moving the things on it. He is anxious for them to go.*)

Mrs. M.,—I congratulate you on your discernment. Will you not go with me to the ball room?

(*Doctor and Rector follow her as she goes out*

*through portieres. She turns and looks toward G., but he makes no move, only he watches her from under his eyebrows with one of his sidelong glances.*

*As they disappear, closing portieres behind them, G. quickly opens drawer, takes out package of letters, holds it under shade of lamp to see them better, and appears to be considering something carefully. He looks toward fire in grate.*)

G. (*half aloud, to himself*),—I must destroy these.

(*He goes to fire place, but the fire is low. He tries to start it into life by poking with poker, but there are only a few coals.*)

G. (*straightening up impatiently*),—No, the fire is too low. Tomorrow will do,—tomorrow,—tomorrow.

(*As he repeats these words absentmindedly, he returns to table, puts the letters back in the drawer, closes drawer and turns key, and puts key in right hand drawer. The lamp, which appears to be going out, diverts his attention, and he peers under the shade to see what is the matter.*)

G.,—There is no oil in this lamp. It is going out.

(*He fusses with wick, but light grows dimmer. At length he blows out the light.*)

G. (*continuing*),—I will have it filled.

(*He goes out, left. The stage is left in semi-darkness, only the flickering light from the fire-place.*

*Mrs. G., in mask, appears suddenly at portieres. She slips in, draws them together and holds them, but in such a manner that she can look down hall toward left, as if expecting some one. The light falls on her face and neck. In a moment she steps back a step or*

*two and Capt. S. enters quickly. He carefully draws portieres together.*)

Mrs. G. (*as he shuts out light, the stage darkens*),—How dark it is in here.

Capt. S.,—So much the better, no one will come.

Mrs. G.,—But I am almost afraid. Let us get over here where it is not so gloomy. (*She goes toward fire place.*) This room has always terrified me.

Capt. S.,—Why?

Mrs. G.,—I don't know, I don't know, but whenever I come in here it seems as though I am intruding; those eyes (*she points to portrait over mantel*) follow me with such a sneering look, as much as to say: Well, what are you doing here in the Grantor house?

Capt. S. (*peering at portrait*),—Who is it?

Mrs. G.,—His father—

Capt. S.,—Oh—h—I remember hearing (*he pauses*) and is this the room in which he died?

Mrs. G.,—Yes.

Capt. S.,—There were strange rumors about the manner of his death.

Mrs. G. (*in low voice*),—No one knows just how it happened, but a woman's voice was heard, a cry, a scream, and then silence. When the servants came they found him alone,—dead.

Capt. S. (*again peering at portrait*),—A handsome man.

Mrs. G.,— If the light was better you would see the sneer in the eyes.

Capt. S.,—I can feel it as it is. I do not wonder the room terrifies you.

Mrs. G.,—It seems filled with shadows that move.

Capt. S.,—And so it is with phantoms of people you do not know. Friends and companions of your husband's youth. Why did you ever marry into this lonely house?

Mrs. G.,—Why? Why does a woman do anything in this world? We do not know our own motives.

Capt. S.,—It was not love—

Mrs. G.,—You should not say that. It was something finer and purer than love. It was gratitude for what he had done for my mother. So far back as I can remember, he was our good friend and benefactor. I did not know it at the time, but it was he who sent me to school, and afterwards to Europe. He looked after the little property we had, and must have doubled our slender income from his own.

Capt. S.,—I am told he is selfish.

Mrs. G.,—No, he is so generous. He gives in so many different ways, and he is so thoughtful. Why, when he used to come to see us he always brought me some beautiful present. At first my mother was happy to see my delight, but before she died she put away everything he ever gave me.

Capt. S.,—Why did she do that?

Mrs. G.,—I do not know. She did not say a word, but one day, not long before she died, she gathered the things all together and put them away.

Capt. S. (*bitterly*),—So you married because you were grateful.

Mrs. G.,—I married because I thought I ought to, because I was sure she would wish it.

Capt. S.,—Wish you ought to marry a man old enough to be your grandfather?

Mrs. G.,—It was not a question of age.

Capt. S.,—No, nor of love.

Mrs. G.,—No, nor was it a question of love. It was a question of duty. For all his goodness to my mother I felt I owed some return.

Capt. S.,—That you should sacrifice yourself, your life? Do you dream for a minute that your mother with all her wealth of love and sympathy would approve this marriage were she living?

Mrs. G.,—I have tried to think she would.

Capt. S.,—I did not know her well, but I recall her pale, sad face, her low, musical voice. I remember how she used to look at you,—

Mrs. G.,—Yes, almost as if she knew she would not be with me very long. And she used to go to her room and cry so hard. I could hear the muffled sobs through the closed door. There were times when some terrible grief oppressed her. Once I heard her talking with Mr. Grantor, begging, pleading about something; I did not hear what they said, but he tried to calm and sooth her as gently as if she was a child. He was always just that way, patient and kind when she was nervous and almost hysterical.

Capt. S.,—He did not ask you to marry him until after she died?

Mrs. G.,—No, I was left alone, and it seemed for the best.

Capt. S. (*bitterly*),—And you had told me you would wait.

Mrs. G.,—I was but a girl then, just out of school, scarce more than a child.

Capt. S.,—You loved me?

Mrs. G. (*in a low voice*),—Yes.

Capt. S.,—And you love me still? (*He leans toward her and takes her hand.*)

Mrs. G. (*agitated and drawing away*),—You should not ask. It is not fair. (*Then as he approaches closer and attempts to take her in his arms.*) No, no, no, do not, I beg of you. Let me go.

Capt. S. (*intensely*),—But you love me.

Mrs. G. (*breaking away from him*),—No, please don't, oh, I am so happy tonight. It is like a dream, the flowers, the music (*music heard faintly*), listen, there, it is a waltz. You must dance with me, just once more, our last dance in mask,—come, come—

(*She starts toward rear entrance. Reaching out her right hand, she takes his to urge him along. She is near the portieres and about to press them back with her left hand.*

*Grantor has entered unperceived at left and stands in the shadow by the door, watching them. He does not recognize them. Capt. S. holds back.*)

Mrs. G. (*repeating*),—Come—

Capt. S. (*holding her back*),—Tell me first that you love me.

Mrs. G.,—Tonight you are my prince.

Capt. S. (*drawing her toward him fiercely*),—Take off the mask.

Mrs. G.,—No—no—let me go—let me go—listen, the dance, the dance. Oh, some one will come. (*He has drawn her head back on his shoulder. The music is heard. She ceases to struggle. He kisses her. Her arm steals about his neck as he kisses her, and she murmurs*),—My prince, my prince.

(*The clock begins slowly striking midnight. She starts back.*)

Mrs. G. (*startled*),—It is midnight. They will miss us. We must hurry back. (*She pushes back portieres with left hand so that light falls full on her face. There is a blast of a horn.*) The warning signal. It will sound once more to unmask. My dream is over. I am awake.

Capt. S. (*still holding her right hand*),—Take yours off here, for me.

(*She disengages her right hand and quickly removes mask. Her face is in the light. Grantor, who has watched them without emotion, save annoyance, expressed in gesture, recognizes his wife. He gives an exclamation which attracts their attention, and he starts forward toward them, staggering, and clutching at the air in their direction as if he would reach them with his trembling fingers. He totters, puts one hand to his head, then clutches at his collar with the other, and sinks into large easy chair which is at right of table. He has suffered a stroke which for the time being renders him almost helpless. His face works,*

*he utters guttural sounds.*),—Angh—angh—angh angh—angh—

(*His eyebrows move convulsively. He still knows his wife, and when she rushes to him and kneels by his side he glares at her, and works his fingers as if he would clutch her, but he can lift his arm only a little.*)

Angh—h—h—(*sound dies away in long exhalation*).

(*The clock continues slowly to strike the hour.*

*Capt. S. has called the doctor, who hurries in at rear, followed by Rector. The captain remains in background. The doctor hurries to Grantor's side, examines him quickly.*)

Dr. H.,—It is not fatal, some sudden shock. A glass of brandy.

(*Rector rushes out, right, for glass of brandy, returns instantly. Doctor gives Grantor a swallow; it revives him a little.*)

Dr. H.,—He will be better in the morning.

(*There is a second blast upon the horn, sounds of laughter and merriment in the ball room. A band of revellers, unmasked and swinging their masks, fly past the opening at rear, crying*),—Unmask! Unmask!!

(*Curtain.*)

(AUTHOR'S PROOF. RETURN TO AUTHOR.)

## ACT II.

Scene—Drawing room in same house.

Windows in rear, looking out upon avenue. Two entrances at right; two at left, the larger toward front leads to hall and front door. Room richly furnished. Coverings, hangings, etc., very handsome, but rather sombre. Heavy, carved table at right. It holds some beautifully bound books, bric-a-brac, etc. Settee or sofa to left of table facing audience, but slightly angling toward left rear. Handsome and comfortable chairs. A large easy chair at left, near center. Pictures on walls. Two or three beautiful vases, bronzes, etc., on pedestals. In short, about such a drawing room as one would find in the old-fashioned home of an old and wealthy New Yorker.

Time—
Afternoon of the next day. About five o'clock.

As curtain rises, John is discovered entering very carefully through rear door at right, and closing door after him noiselessly. He then walks quickly but softly to rear door on left, which leads to library, turns key in door and puts key in pocket. He goes out left, front, closing door after him. In a moment voices are heard in the hall and John ushers in the Rector.

Rector (*his tone expressing his profound sympathy*),—How is Mr. Grantor this afternoon, John.

John,—Much better, sir. He has quite recovered his speech.

Rector,—I am so glad to hear that. I was afraid last night it was a stroke that might prove fatal. Ah, your master is too good a man to lose. The community needs such men.

(*John's face wears a queer expression, and he says nothing.*)

Rector (*continuing*),—You have been with Mr. Grantor many years?

John,—Nearly twenty, sir.

Rector,—Then you know his good qualities better than I.

John (*with a queer look*),—Yes, sir.

Rector,—You say the doctor is here?

John,—He has been here most of the day, sir. It is not easy to control Mr. Grantor. He will not stay in his room.

Rector,—Strange!

John,—He is very much changed, sir. He is very restless.

Rector,—Will you be good enough to tell the doctor I am here?

(*John bows and goes out right rear. The Rector walks to rear and looks out one of the windows. In a moment or so Dr. H. enters right rear. Rector turns to greet him, clasping the doctor's hand in both of his effusively.*)

Rector,—How is our good friend? tell me.

Dr. H. (*shortly. He looks careworn and worried*),—A sick man.

Rector,—But John just said he is better.

Dr. H.,—And so he is, but none the less a very sick man.

Rector,—He is up?

Dr. H.,—He will not remain in bed. Ever since he regained the use of his limbs he has been bent upon

leaving his room. He seems possessed to get down here and into the library.

Rector (*surprised*),—The room where he was stricken.

Dr. H.,—Yes. When he was not quite in his right mind he kept mumbling something about a drawer, a drawer.

Rector (*tapping his head*),—He is not quite right.

Dr. H. (*thoughtfully*),—I don't know. He seems all right now, but he is changed. I have never seen so great a change come over a man in so short a time.

Rector,—What was it, a stroke of paralysis.

Dr. H.,—At first I thought so, but from the rapidity with which he has recovered I should say he suffered some sudden shock, rather than a stroke. Something must have happened that we know nothing of. When I question him, he grits his teeth together and gives me a queer look, a look I have never seen in his eyes before. There is something he will not tell. (*The doctor walks to and fro a moment absorbed in thought, then he continues, half to himself*) No, it was not a stroke of paralysis, but some kind of a shock that has upset his poise and shaken his marvellous power of self control.

Rector,—I do not understand. He was such a strong man.

Dr. H.,—Strong? Yes, in outward appearance. But his strength was a good deal like that of the crust of the earth,—apparently solid, but thinly covering a seething, moulten interior. A shock, the thin, outward crust parts and the fires of hell are visible.

Rector (*puzzled*),—You mean—?

Dr. H.,—I mean that every man's real self is hidden by an outward crust of appearances, thick and rigid with some, thin and brittle with others. In Grantor's case, the outward coating is rent beyond repair.

Rector (*wringing his hands*),—How very unfortunate!

Dr. H. (*cynically*),—Rather. The best of us need the protection of our cloak of hypocrisy.

Rector,—May I see him?

Dr. H.,—There is no objection. He is quite himself most of the time. He may be down here any moment. He is very restless.

(*John enters at left forward entrance.*)

John,—Captain Stanmore to see Mrs. Grantor. I have told him,—

Dr. H. (*interrupting*),—Show him in here. I wish to see him.

(*John goes out same entrance.*)

Dr. H. (*to Rector*),—The captain may know what happened last night. He must have been in the room for it was he who called me.

Rector,—I remember, I remember. He was standing near the entrance to the hall.

(*John opens door and ushers the captain in. He is carefully dressed in conventional afternoon dress.*)

Capt. S. (*speaking quietly*),—I called to inquire after Mr. Grantor.

Dr. H. (*to John*),—You may tell Mrs. Grantor that Captain Stanmore wishes to see her.

Capt. S.,—If entirely convenient.

(*The doctor bows and by gesture indicates that it is.*

*John goes out right rear. There is a slight pause, during which the three men stand rather stiff and ill at ease. The doctor breaks the silence.*)

Dr. H.,—Mr. Grantor is better. He is able to be up. In fact he may be down any moment.

Capt. S. (*startled*),—Down,—here? I—I did not expect to see him.

(*The doctor has eyed the captain closely.*)

Dr. H. (*dryly*),—No?—then you may have an agreeable surprise in store.

Capt. S. (*fully recovering his self-possession and speaking calmly and earnestly*),—I am very glad to hear he is so much better.

Dr. H.,—You were present in the room, Captain, when, when Mr. Grantor suffered this attack.

Capt. S.,—I was.

Dr. H.,—Then you can tell us just what happened.

Capt. S. (*quickly*),—Does he not remember?

Dr. H.,—I do not know, but if he does he will not tell.

Capt. S.,—Then it is not for me to speak.

Dr. H.,—So then there was something.

Capt. S.,—I did not say so.

Dr. H.,—You were there with Mrs. Grantor?

Capt. S.,—You will pardon me, doctor, but it seems to me you are asking a third party (*he indicates him-*

*self*) concerning matters which your patient, it seems, will not discuss with you.

Dr. H.,—It is the duty of a physician to ascertain the cause of his patient's condition.

Capt. S.,—From the patient himself, if he is in the full possession of his faculties.

Dr. H. (*sharply*),—But if he is not?

Capt. S.,—Then Mrs. Grantor is the one to whom you should apply for information.

Dr. H. (*angrily*),—So you refuse to tell what occurred in the library last night.

Capt. S. (*calmly*),—I refuse to tell *you* at the present time. I have no desire to conceal anything from any one who has a right to know, but so long as Mr. and Mrs. Grantor are silent, I certainly cannot speak.

Rector (*suavely*),—I think the captain is right, doctor. It is quite plain, quite, to my mind. Unless Mrs. Grantor (*he pauses suddenly as Mrs. Grantor enters at right rear. She is pale and her face shows the fearful strain she has been under. She is dressed in black. As she speaks to the captain, her hands, which work nervously, and her lips, which twitch slightly, show the effort she is obliged to make to control herself. She is on the verge of a nervous collapse. The doctor knows it and is apprehensive*).

Mrs. G.,—You wished to see me, Captain?

Capt. S. (*speaking with constraint*),—I called to enquire after Mr. Grantor.

Mrs. G.,—You are very kind. He—he is better,—is he not doctor? (*She appeals to the doctor like a person slightly dazed.*)

Dr. H.,—Very much, I can assure you.

(*There is an awkward pause.*)

Dr. H. (*continuing pointedly*),—I was asking the captain about what occurred last night—

Mrs. G. (*hastily and nervously*),—Yes—yes, I know. You wished me to tell you, but I could not (*she catches her breath*) I could not—think. (*Her voice sinks as she utters the last word, and her face assumed a bewildered expression. The Rector touches the doctor on the arm and shakes his head warningly not to pursue the subject. The doctor glances at Mrs. Grantor keenly, then nods an assent to the Rector and the two go out, right rear.*)

Capt. S. (*so soon as the Rector and doctor disappear, he starts toward her and seizes her hand. She lets him take it unresistingly, but it lies limp in his. She passes her other hand over her eyes as if to clear her faculties*),—You are looking ill. Tell me what has happened.

(*He leads her toward sofa.*)

Mrs. G.,—I do not know. It is all so like a dream, the ball, the music, the masks, I can scarcely think,—and you were there.

Capt. S. (*softly*),—Yes.

Mrs. G.,—I have not slept since.

Capt. S.,—Your eyes show it. You need rest.

Mrs. G.,—But I can't rest. I can't rest. I close my eyes and try to sleep, but like an ugly nightmare I see him struggling and clutching at the air. I hear him try to speak, then the signal, the horn, and the loud calls, "unmask! unmask"; and it seems as if the

masks that you and I wore were snatched away by some invisible power and we stood revealed in all our guilt and shame. (*He tries to soothe and calm her, but she continues*),—He must have seen, he must have been there in the shadow all the time, and he did not know me until the clock struck and I took off my mask, but (*despairingly*) he knows me now.

Capt. S. (*trying to reassure her*),—You must blame me, not yourself. What you did, you could not help—

Mrs. G. (*as if she had not heard him, and looking straight ahead, almost as if he was not present*),—and I have tried so hard to be true to him, to be a faithful wife, so hard all these years.

Capt. S.,—You forget that you loved me before you became his wife.

Mrs. G.,—But you went away, and I was left alone.

Capt. S.,—I left you with your mother.

Mrs. G.,—She died.

Capt. S.,—And he took advantage of her death, of your loneliness, to win you.

Mrs. G.,—You must not say that, you must not say that. He was always so good to her and when she was gone I had no one else. You were 'way off on the other side of the world. You had not written for months and months—

Capt. S.,—I was fighting savages and sick with the fever.

Mrs. G.,—I did not know, how could I know that you would ever come back to me?

Capt. S.,—I had told you I loved you.

Mrs. G. (*smiling sadly*),—A man does not find it difficult to say that. (*He starts to resent her words, but she presses lightly on his arm and continues*),—Forgive me, I do not mean that. I am not quite myself. What I wish you to know and feel very sure of is that I did not marry because I had forgotten you, because I had ceased to love you, but because I felt that it was my duty to, that I owed something to the memory of my mother, to whom he had been the kindest, most generous, the best of friends.

Capt. S. (*bitterly*),—So you gave him your youth—

Mrs. G.,—I gave him the best I had, all, all, save love. That I did not have to give.

Capt. S.,—And you love me still?

Mrs. G.,—You must not ask me, for if I did and could not deny it to myself, I would deny it to you.

Capt. S. (*with exultation*),—And your eyes would belie every word your tongue might utter. You cannot deny it. Oh! Alice, my love, my sweetheart, you are still mine though (*his voice becomes intense*) married to another.

Mrs. G. (*looking at him intently and drawing back a little*),—Yes, I am yours, in so far as the ghost of a woman who is dead can belong to a man who is living. The Alice you knew is dead. She loved you. She loved you so long as she lived, and her uneasy spirit loves you still. But the woman you see beside you, the woman to whom you are now listening, she is not the Alice you knew. She is another and different being, a counterfeit presentment that cannot love.

Capt. S.,—But last night you were mine, you put your arms about my neck, you kissed me,—

Mrs. G. (*interrupting*),—Last night we moved in an enchanted world. Time was generous and retraced his relentless steps. I was once more a girl, you were once again a lover. You spoke and I listened, drinking each word as the parched traveler laps the cool waters of a crystal spring. I forgot myself and dreamed you were a prince come to awaken me from a long and sluggish sleep. In my dream I saw you bend over me, I felt your arms about me, your warm breath upon my cheek. You kissed me and then the clock struck midnight, the horn, the signal to unmask, and I awoke. Oh, why was it a dream? And if a dream why did I not sleep on—forever?

Capt. S.,—It was not a dream. No more than today is a dream. I loved you last night. I love you now.

Mrs. G. (*looks at him searchingly*),—No, it is not the same. Your voice does not sound as it used to. There is a different look in your eyes. You are no longer a prince from fairyland, but a man, with all the impulses, all the passions of a man. We have dropped our masks. We see ourselves as we are.

Capt. S.,—Then you no longer love me?

Mrs. G.,—I love what I saw in you last night. I love the man I remember from five years ago. But you have changed.

Capt. S. (*trying to make light of the matter*),—That much older, that is all.

Mrs. G.,—No, you are different. It is not time that has made the difference, but life. In a day, in an

hour, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye we change. A single bitter experience may change a woman beyond redemption. Everything we do, everything we think, every secret wish is betrayed somewhere, somehow. Nothing is hidden for long. Look at me. (*She looks searchingly in his eyes and he tries to meet her gaze, but it is difficult. She shakes her head mournfully*),—You are not the same. There are secret depths in your eyes which you do not wish uncovered. There is the look of guilt. I see the vague shadows of other women. Who are they? Whence do they come? What did they mean to you?

Capt. S.,—Nonsense, how perfectly absurd. You are nervous, excited.

Mrs. G.,—It may be, but I seem to see things more clearly than ever before. In every voice there is a false and artificial ring. Even my servants move about with the hollow smirk of deception on their features, as if they too knew things they would not disclose. We live in a world of lies. The life we lead is one long conventional self-satisfied lie.

Capt. S.,—I do not understand you, Alice, you never used to talk that way.

Mrs. G.,—No, for until now my eyes were only partly opened. I saw as a child, I heard as a child, I thought as a child, but now I see,—I see, I am awake. It was you who aroused me,—you, when you kissed me last night.

Capt. S. (*looking at her more boldly*),—Look once more and you will see that I love you—

Mrs. G. (*looking at him*),—Yes, but not in the old

way, not as the boy first loves the girl, timidly and shrinkingly. It is another love that I see, a stronger and fiercer love, the love of hot desire. It was that love which I felt in your kiss, it was that love which opened my eyes.

Capt. S.,—If my love is fiercer it is because it has smouldered all these years, feeding on itself. On the eve of battle I used to dream of you, in the midst of conflicts, savage and bloody, you were present like an invisible angel, shielding and protecting me. I have loved you as no man ever loved a woman.

Mr. G. (*pressing his arm so as to induce him to turn his face toward hers*),—But you have loved others, too.

Capt. S. (*avoiding her gaze*),—No.

Mrs. G. (*with conviction, and slowly*),—With your lips you say, no. A louder, clearer voice says, yes. Why try to deceive me now, *now* when all deception between us is impossible?

Capt. S. (*impatiently*),—If I have known others it has not been in the same way—

Mrs. G.,—No, not in the same way you once loved me. A man can never love but once in that way, but you have loved others as you love me *now*.

Capt. S.,—No, you are wrong, I love you as I have always loved you, just the same—

Mrs. G.,—Stop, think a moment; was the kiss you gave me last night just the same as the one you gave me when we parted five years ago? That was our first kiss. I shall never forget how my heart thrilled and how my soul was filled with pure delight when

your lips barely touched mine, so chastely, so reverently, it was something less or something more—who knows?—than a kiss. But last night, last night, you devoured my very being. It was the triumph of the man over the woman. I could feel your exultation in the beating of your heart. You crushed me with your strong arms. My lips were red with blood—

Capt. S. (*beside himself,*)—Stop! stop,—or—by the gods, I will kiss you now. (*He seizes her, draws her close to him. She struggles.*)

Mrs. G.,—No, no, not again. I beg of you (*she fights with all her strength*) not again. (*For a second she gets him at arm's length, crying*),—I will not, I tell you I will not (*but with resistless power he draws her to him, and puts her head back; she begins to yield, but murmurs*),—Oh, it is brutal,—it is brutal. (*She struggles vainly. Her face is turned toward his. There is a look of triumph in his face as he looks down upon hers, and waits a second to exult in his victory. Slowly his lips approach hers, but just as he is about to kiss her, there is a noise at the front entrance, left. He turns his head quickly, but before they have time to separate, Mrs. Manley enters, the door closing behind her. She sees them and stops suddenly near door. Mrs. G. sinks back on sofa, burying her face in her hands.*)

Capt. S. (*so surprised he can only exclaim*),—Grace Manley!

Mrs. M. (*confused and embarrassed*),—Captain Stanmore, you here? I—I thought you were in San Francisco.

Capt. S. (*trying to appear at ease*),—I came east a week ago.

(*There is an awkward pause. Mrs. G. has recovered a little of her self-possession.*)

Mrs. M.,—I came to see Mrs. Grantor on a matter of importance. I would not let the man announce me. I am sorry. I will go—

Mrs. G.,—No, no. I beg of you, remain. I feel better now. I am quite myself. A sudden faintness,—Captain Stanmore was kind enough to—

Mrs. M. (*her lip curling slightly*),—I understand. The captain is most thoughtful and attentive. I remember when we were crossing from Manila to Honolulu—

Capt. S. (*interrupting sharply*),—Shall I not ring for a glass of water?

Mrs. G.,—No, but if you will excuse me a moment I will get a flask of salts; that is all I need.

(*She disappears through front door at right.*)

Capt. S. (*sharply*),—Not a word about that trip.

Mrs. M. (*with a sneer*),—What a pity my entrance was so badly timed. It quite spoiled your little scene. I assure you the tableau was most effective.

Capt. S. (*agitated*),—I beg of you to keep quiet. Do not tell her—

Mrs. M.,—That you made love to me as fiercely as you are now making love to her. (*She laughs.*)

Capt. S. (*embarrassed*),—I—I knew Mrs. Grantor before she was married.

Mrs. M.,—And you are renewing an old friendship.

How very touching! Your embrace was purely Platonic, I suppose. (*She pauses a second, looks at the Captain, who is too confused and irritated to reply.*) So, you have been in New York a week and have not been to see me.

Capt. S.,—I—I have been very busy.

Mrs. M.,—So it seems.

Capt. S.,—I have intended calling, but I have had no time,—I will come tomorrow.

Mrs. M.,—You will be too late. I sail tomorrow noon.

Capt. S.,—Promise me you will not tell her (*he points toward door where Mrs. G. disappeared.*)

Mrs. M.,—Do you really think so much of her as all that?

Capt. S.,—I loved her before she was married. I love her now. It is the only decent love I have ever known.

Mrs. M.,—Thank you! How very flattering. You forget those moonlight nights on the Pacific, the flowery paths and shadowy walks of Honolulu (*she is mocking him*); you forget your protestations of fierce love and everlasting devotion,—dear me, and I, like a weak and foolish woman, listened and believed the gallant captain from Manila (*ironically and with a gesture toward door where Mrs. Grantor went out*). Your only decent love!

Capt. S.,—Forgive me, Grace, I did not mean that in just the way it sounded, but you know what I mean. You are not free. I could not love you as I once loved her.

Mrs. M. (*bitterly*),—But you could love me as you now love her.

Capt. S.,—No, not quite the same, for I loved her when I had the right, when I thought she would be my wife, and that old, pure love is not quite dead.

Mrs. M. (*looking at him a moment, then extending her hand sympathetically*),—It is all right, Jack. You are a soldier, and I have been through too many campaigns myself to take a little defeat like this to heart, —but (*she looks at him half seriously, half smiling*) I did almost fall in love with the big captain from Manila, whose voice was so low and musical, whose caress was as tender as a woman's, whose kiss—s (*her voice sinks and fades into a whisper, and she looks at him through half-closed eyes, leaning close to him*).

Capt. S. (*drawing himself up and inhaling a deep breath to throw off the spell of love manner*),—Don't, for God's sake, don't—not here.

Mrs. M. (*recovering herself with a clear little laugh*), —You are afraid. Ah! well, never mind. It is all over. That little episode is a memory,—and not an altogether unpleasant memory, is it Jack?

Capt. S. (*nervously*),—No, no, Grace, but be careful. I would not have her suspect for the world.

Mrs. M.,—Nor I. I have some sense of decency left, myself. You knew the wife before she was married. I knew the husband—

Capt. S.,—You!

Mrs. M.,—Yes, is there anything strange about that? Robert Grantor in his day has been a fascinating man.

Capt. S.,—But I never heard he cared anything about women.

Mrs. M.,—There was one good thing about him, he kept his affairs to himself. If I had not been Mrs. Charles Manley, I might have been Mrs. Robert Grantor.

Capt. S.,—Does she know? (*He motions toward door where Mrs. G. disappeared.*)

Mrs. M.,—No, but I came here today to get some little mementoes of that affair, and may be obliged to tell her.

Capt. S. (*impulsively*),—Don't, for she believes in him,—(*he pauses*) and yet if she knew (*he turns over in his mind how the knowledge might aid him*)—if she knew, perhaps—

Mrs. M., (*divining his thoughts*),—She would listen to you? It is not difficult to follow a man's thoughts when he is in love. No,—I wish you luck, but I will not help you to the extent of undeceiving her regarding her husband any more than is necessary. She is unhappy enough as it is, without letting her know the sort of man to whom she is married.

(*Mrs. G. enters at right front. She presses her handkerchief to her face nervously, and she has a small, gold enamelled flask in her hand, which she drops on the table. Mrs. M. goes toward rear to leave them alone a moment.*)

Mrs. G. (*trying to speak with composure*),—It was very kind of you to call, Captain. I shall tell Mr. Grantor—

Capt. S. (*approaching close to her and taking her*

*outstretched hand. He speaks rapidly and in a low voice*).,—I shall call this evening to see you,—alone.

Mrs. G. (*apprehensive*).,—No, no, my husband—

Capt. S.,—If you cannot see me, send word. I will understand.

(*He bows low and goes out, left front.*)

Mrs. G. (*turning to Mrs. M., who comes forward*),—You wish to see me?

Mrs. M.,—Yes—I was at the ball last night.

Mrs. G.,—Indeed! I do not remember seeing you.

Mrs. M.,—I left just before they unmasked. This morning I heard Mr. Grantor was taken suddenly ill.

Mrs. G.,—Yes, very few knew it. We kept it from our guests. It was nothing serious. He is better to-day.

Mrs. M.,—But at his age and in his condition a stroke is apt to prove fatal.

Mrs. G.,—It was not a stroke. The doctor hardly knows what it was. He is better.

Mrs. M.,—Perhaps for a few days, but who knows when he may have another attack.

Mrs. G.,—No one can tell. We must hope for the best.

Mrs. M. (*harshly*),—If he dies it will be no loss to you.

Mrs. G. (*not trusting her ears*),—Pardon me, I do not think I understood you.

Mrs. M. (*repeating still more harshly*),—I said, if he dies it will be no loss to you.

Mrs. G. (*with dignity*),—He is my husband.

Mrs. M.,—He might have been your grandfather.

Mrs. G. (*starting to rise*),—If you came here to discuss—

Mrs. M. (*quickly and in a different tone*),—No, no, forgive me. (*Mrs. G. resumes her seat.*) I did not know that you still believe in Robert Grantor.

Mrs. G.,—Why shouldn't I? He has never been anything but kind to me.

Mrs. M. (*bitterly*),—Kind! Is it kind in a man of sixty to marry a girl of twenty? (*Mrs. G. makes a gesture of dignified protest.*) There, never mind, but I have known him longer, perhaps better, than you.

Mrs. G.,—Yes, I have been told you were old friends, but he has never mentioned your name.

Mrs. M.,—Have you ever heard him mention the name of any woman he has known intimately? He is discretion personified. His lips are well trained. His tongue is under perfect control. I have often wondered how he could keep from betraying himself. Think of the strain day and night.

Mrs. G. (*bewildered*),—The strain,—betray himself —I do not understand.

Mrs. M.,—No, not now, perhaps, but some day you will, some day his self-control will give way. A man cannot play a part all his life. (*Mrs. M. is silent a moment as if thinking. Mrs. G. waits patiently and wearily.*)

Mrs. M. (*with a gesture, changing the subject and coming to the object of her call*),—I am sailing for

Europe tomorrow to be gone a long time. While I am away he may suffer another shock or stroke, or whatever it is. He is an old and worn-out man. He is played-out and may die any day. I have a favor to ask of you.

(*Mrs. G. looks at her and motions her to proceed.*)

Mrs. M. (*continuing with some hesitation and embarrassment*),—I said I knew your husband. It was before you were married, before he had met your mother, before he knew you. It pleased him to show me some attention, even to be devoted—

Mrs. G. (*surprised*),—Devoted—to you!

Mrs. M. (*cynically*),—Oh, that was nothing for him. Devotion to women has been his one great weakness, though I did not know it at the time, and was foolish enough to believe he loved me.

Mrs. G. (*listening amazed*),—And he made love to you, to you, the wife of another; I cannot believe it.

Mrs. M. (*with a sneer*),—Is there anything strange in that? Is not that the order of the day in what we are pleased to call society? In that respect he is no worse than other men we both know (*she lays significant stress on the last three words and looks at Mrs. G. pointedly*).

Mrs. G. (*controlling herself with an effort*),—Go on, what is it you wish of me?

Mrs. M.,—I was silly enough to write your husband some letters,—remember he was not your husband then; it did not concern you at the time. He has those letters still. I wish to get them.

Mrs. G.,—How can I help you?

Mrs. M.,—I can tell you where he keeps them. Will you get them and you give them to me?

Mrs. G.,—I have no right—

Mrs. M. (*interrupting fiercely*),—He is now your husband; the letters are mine.

Mrs. G.,—But you wrote them to him.

Mrs. M.,—I wrote them to him after he had promised to marry me if I could get a divorce. If it had not been for you he would have married me. I told him so, I wrote him so in black and white. It is for your interest as well as mine that those letters should be destroyed.

Mrs. G. (*yielding before the other's fierce earnestness*),—Where are they?

Mrs. M. (*pointing toward left, rear door*),—There, in the left-hand drawer of the table in his library. He keeps it locked, but sometimes leaves the key in the drawer at the right. I know, for again and again have I seen him take them out and read them,—that was when he wished to convince me of his love.

Mrs. G. (*pointing toward door to library—the left rear door*),—You have been in there with him,—alone?

Mrs. M.,—Is there anything shocking about that?

Mrs. G. (*repeating, without noticing the tone of Mrs. M.'s last question*),—In this house,—in that room with him alone. (*Then turning to Mrs. M. suddenly*) I do not believe it.

Mrs. M. (*harshly*),—It doesn't matter to me whether you believe it or not. I am telling you where he keeps the letters women have written him. When you find

them perhaps your eyes will be opened. If he should die, all his papers would fall into the hands of strangers. We must destroy those letters at once, to-day.

Mrs. G. (*hesitating*),—If what you tell me is true—

Mrs. M.,—True! Why should I lie to you. I know they are there, for I have seen them. There is no one here—go and look.

Mrs. G. (*nervously*),—Not now,—I am afraid some one—

Mrs. M.,—Then I will. You stay here, and if any one comes, you can say you have—(*she goes to door while speaking and tries to open it*) It is locked.

Mrs. G.,—It wasn't locked a little while ago.

Mrs. M.,—Can we not get in the other way?

Mrs. G. (*apprehensively*),—No,—no. I would not dare. The man is in the hall.

Mrs. M.,—Yes, I know, he watches that room for his master. Last night he came in while I was looking. I told him I was in search of a fan, but he knew better. Can you not send him out on some errand?

Mrs. G.,—Not now. He would suspect. He may have recognize you at the door. Perhaps later, to-night, when all are asleep, I can steal down—I will try, and if I find them I will send them to you in the morning, early.

Mrs. M.,—You must find them.

Mrs. G.,—I will try—(*she rises as an intimation that there is nothing more to be said. Mrs. M. also rises*).

Mrs. M.,—You must get them. They are of no use

to him. If he had had any sense of decency he would have destroyed them long ago, but he keeps them to read and gloat over when alone, just as he keeps mementoes of other conquests over women.

Mrs. G.,—I cannot believe you. I will not listen to you. It is not possible.

Mrs. M. (*shrugging her shoulders*),—That is your lookout. It is not my business to undeceive you. All I am interested in is to destroy the evidences of my own idiotic folly.

(*She is about to leave, when the Rector enters, right rear, bland and suave. He recognizes Mrs. M. at once.*)

Rector (*cheerfully and with affability*),—Ah, Mrs. Manley, so charmed to see you; a pleasure, I am sure.

(*They shake hands, he taking hers in both of his effusively.*)

Rector (*continuing soberly*),—You called to inquire about Mr. Grantor? I remember you knew him, you and he were—were—(*the Rector pauses suddenly and there is an awkward silence*).

Mrs. M. (*coolly*),—I did have the pleasure of knowing Mr. Grantor, *slightly,* years ago. I called to see Mrs. Grantor.

Rector,—And she needs the support and sympathy of all her friends, for, I regret to say, Mr. Grantor seems very much broken in health. He is not the same man, I assure you; you would scarcely recognize him. I did my best to cheer him up. I tried to divert him by talking of the work of the parish, of the charities in which he has been so actively interested, but he paid no attention to what I was saying, no at-

tention whatsoever. That is not at all like him. For the time being, the noble impulses which have characterized him seem paralyzed.

Mrs. M. (*with significance*),—A strange case, surely, where so slight a thing as a sudden shock should paralyze all the good in a man, and leave the bad unscathed.

Rector,—Ah, there is no bad in Robert Grantor. He is one of the few men against whom no one can utter a word of reproach. A spotless and unselfish life. Am I not right, Mrs. Grantor?

Mrs. G. (*evasively*),—I had always thought so—

Rector,—There, there, you see, Mrs. Manley, and a wife ought to know.

Mrs. M.,—Yes, she ought to know—more than she usually does. (*She starts to go.*)

Rector,—May I not see you to your carriage?

Mrs. M.,—You may go farther. I will take you up town if you are going that way.

Rector,—You are very good, very good, indeed. It is a nasty day and I was on the point of calling a cab. (*Turning to Mrs. G.*) I will call again, tomorrow, my dear. I wish you to feel that you can rely upon me, that I am with you in spirit every moment. (*He is clasping Mrs. G.'s limp hand in both of his in his effusive manner. Mrs. M. by her attitude and expression betrays her slight faith in the value of his protestations.*)

Mrs. M. (*bluntly*),—If you are going with me you will have to hurry. Come.

(*The Rector again shakes Mrs. G.'s hand most warmly and he and Mrs. M. go out, left front.*

*Mrs. G. watches them go out, and the door close behind them. She then stands a few seconds as if undecided. Then turns softly to door at rear right, listens a second, then crosses rapidly to door at left rear, which leads to library. She softly tries door, finds, as Mrs. M. did, that it is locked. She tries again, then steps forward and presses button.*

*John enters, left front.*)

Mrs. G.,—The door to the library is locked.

John (*very respectfully*),—Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. G.,—Why?

John (*a little confused*),—Mr. Grantor is ill and I did not know—

Mrs. G. (*sharply*),—You will please unlock it. There is no reason why any room in the house should be locked.

John,—But last night there was a lady in a mask at Mr. Grantor's table.

Mrs. G.,—She was looking for her—fan.

John,—So she said, ma'am.

Mrs. G.,—I know all about it. I do not care to have doors locked as if there were thieves in the house. You will get the key and unlock the door.

(*John goes out, left front.*

*Mrs. G. goes to rear and stands a moment looking out, her left hand raised and grasping the heavy curtains, her head resting against her arm. Her attitude suggests dejection and weariness. It grows darker outside. The stage has gradually darkened. Marie, a pretty French girl, enters, right front, and lights*

*lamp on table. The large shade throws a soft light on table and sofa. Mrs. G. slowly draws the curtains over the window where she is looking out. She turns toward maid.*)

Mrs. G.,—Marie, is the doctor still with Mr. Grantor?

Marie,—Yes, madame.

Mrs. G.,—Will you tell him I would like to see him a moment, and you can sit with Mr. Grantor until I come up.

(*Marie goes out, right rear. Mrs. G. goes to the other window, looks out in the rapidly darkening avenue, draws curtain slowly, then comes forward to table, bends over, adjusts the wick of the lamp, and sits down on sofa. John enters, left front, goes to library, inserts key and unlocks door, but leaves it closed.*)

John (*turning to Mrs. G.*),—Shall I leave the key in the door, ma'am?

Mrs. G.,—Certainly, why not?

John,—Mr. Grantor never used to leave the key in the door. He did not care to have the servants—

Mrs. G.,—That was before he was married, John; I suppose in those days no woman was ever permitted to step foot within the library? (*She speaks deliberately.*)

John (*confused, hesitates, then replies evasively*),—He always wished me to look after the room. He does not like to have anyone touch his papers or the things on his table.

Mrs. G.,—Then we must be very careful while he is

sick to see that no one goes in there. (*John bows.*) That is all.

(*John goes out, left front. Dr. H. enters, right rear.*)

Dr. H.,—The maid said you wished to see me.

Mrs. G.,—Yes, I wish to know just how Mr. Gran— (*she catches herself*) how my husband is.

Dr. H. (*slowly*),—I really do not know. It is a queer case. So far as his body is concerned he is much better, though weak.

Mrs. G.,—Do you mean to say that his mind is affected?

Dr. H.,—No, not his mind, exactly. He can think clearly enough. His mind is even more alert than before.

Mrs. G.,—Then what is it, if it is not his body or his mind? Why is he not himself, why does he act so queer?

Dr. H.,—There is some more subtle injury. If such a thing was possible, one would say his moral nature is partially paralyzed, but that is absurd.

Mrs. G.,—Why absurd. Is not our moral nature as much a part of us as our mental or physical?

Dr. H. (*sceptically*),—I dare say, only we physicians do not undertake the care and cure of it. That is the Rector's business.

Mrs. G.,—I used to think so, but it is not true. The priest may console and comfort with visions of another and better life, but he cannot cure our present ills. It is the duty of the physician to keep us so well and strong, so sound and sane, that we cannot help being good.

Dr. H. (*indifferently*),—You may be right, a sound body usually means a sound conscience. There are those who insist that every sin is the symptom of some bodily ill.

Mrs. G.,—And they are right, for I know, I know. We must be strong to be good.

Dr. H.,—There are many good people in the world who are physically weak.

Mrs. G.,—They are good because they have not been tempted beyond their strength. They are good because it is their nature to be good, and they cannot help it. But there are others who have to fight to be good, fight with all their might and main. They need strength. Oh, doctor, I am so tired and weak; there are times I hardly know what I am doing. My mind is all awhirl. I want you to help me, to give me something to make me strong so that I may resist temptation.

Dr. H. (*sympathetically*),—You,—and do you, too, have your struggles? My poor, dear child, what can I do for you? What can I give you?

Mrs. G.,—Part of your strength, part of your clear way of looking at things, part of your great understanding. I wish to know and see, so that I may not stumble and fall.

Dr. H.,—You are speaking in riddles.

Mrs. G. (*vehemently*),—No, no, I am not. I am telling you, oh, so plainly, as plainly as words can express a woman's thoughts. I am groping in the dark. I am like one surrounded by mystery. The life, which seemed so plain to me, turns out to be a world of

shadows, of gloomy, mysterious shadows, moving like phantoms across my path. I thought it was all as clear as day, but now I feel the mystery about me. If you do not help me I shall be lost—lost.

Dr. H. (*at a loss what to do*),—But what can I do? Shall I give you something to make you sleep?

Mrs. G. (*frightened*),—No, no, not to sleep. I do not wish to sleep, for when I sleep I dream, and dreams are more sinful than life; sleep levels the barriers and lets our evil nature loose. It stills the conscience and frees each vicious impulse. I have been asleep all these years. I wish to sleep no more. I would be awake. I wish you to help me to open my eyes, to see things as they are.

Dr. H.,—And do you think you would be any happier if you saw plainly and understood the life about you?

Mrs. G.,—Not happier, perhaps, but stronger. I have been trying to live in a child's paradise, trying to persuade myself that everybody is good, but last night the masks fell away and no one seems the same. My own is gone and I dare not see myself in the mirror. Look at me, tell me, who am I? Am I the girl you knew four years ago, or am I a woman whose every feature bears the mark of guilt and wretchedness? Tell me. (*He shakes his head. She continues rapidly, without giving him time to answer*) Tell me, who are the people about me? Who is the man I am living with as husband? You know, for you have known him all his life, while I, a woman, have never known him at all. Tell me truly, what manner of man

he is? You offer me sleep that I may rest; give me knowledge that I may be strong.

(*In her hysterical agony, she has sunk at his feet, hanging on his knees and looking up at him beseechingly. He clasps her head in his hands gently and caressingly, and is about to answer, when loud screams are heard outside right rear door and Marie rushes in, her hair dishevelled and her waist torn.*)

Marie (*almost hysterical*),—Madame, madame, oh, madame—

Mrs. G. (*starting to her feet*),—What is it, Marie?

Marie (*sobbing*),—Oh, madame, Monsieur Grantor, he try,—he try—(*she sobs convulsively and with one hand gathers her waist together at the neck.*)

Dr. H.,—You ask me what kind of a man your husband is. Look! (*He points at Marie.*) There is your answer.

Mrs. G.,—No, I cannot believe it. He is not himself. He is mad.

Dr. H. (*soberly*),—Let us hope so, but it may be he betrays himself for the first time in his life.

(*Strange sounds are heard outside right rear door. Grantor is following in search of Marie. He makes queer, inarticulate sounds*),—angh—angh—angh—Here—here—here (*sounded through his nose, with his lower jaw hanging. The words are not pronounced, but nasally grunted.*) Angh—where—where—where—where—where? (*same indistinct nasal utterance—rapid, petulant, rising to shriller accent*).

(*He pulls door open with a jerk and stands just inside, a tottering wreck. His face is haggard and*

*drawn and deeply lined. Beneath his shaggy eyebrows his eyes move quickly and furtively. His lips twitch and at times his jaw moves convulsively. He has great difficulty in controlling his nerves. He is like a man whose nervous system has collapsed all of a sudden. With great effort he at times exhibits some of his old self-control, but he cannot maintain it. As he catches sight of Marie cowering just a little in front of him, he does not seem to see the doctor and Mrs. G., but he stretches out a trembling hand toward the girl, and with a queer laugh repeats inarticulately as before*) Angh—here—here—here. (*He totters toward her with a leer on his face.*)

Marie (*terrified, speaking in scarce more than a whisper*),—Oh, madame, madame (*she rushes to Mrs. G. for protection. The doctor takes a step toward Grantor.*

*Grantor pauses suddenly, his hand still partly outstretched. He begins to realize the others are present. He begins to regain control over himself. His hand drops, but it twitches nervously at his side. His head droops a little and he eyes first his wife, then the doctor, then his wife, peering at them from beneath his eyebrows. His jaw still hangs down, giving the lower part of his face a vacuous expression. But soon his jaw begins to move convulsively; he is getting control of it gradually. During all this time Marie is crouching close to Mrs. G., and both women are watching him with the fascination of horror. The doctor remains motionless, waiting. He has put his finger on his lips to enjoin silence.*

*Soon Grantor straightens up a little, and with a*

*feeble gesture brushes his hand across his eyes and forehead.*)

Dr. H. (*in a low voice*),—He is regaining control of himself.

(*Mrs. G. motions Marie to go out,—the girl goes out, right front. Grantor's eyes follow her and he makes a gesture toward her as if he would detain her, but he immediately looks furtively at the doctor and his wife, and restrains himself.*)

Mrs. G. (*going toward her husband, but almost timidly*),—Robert, what is the matter? What has happened?

G. (*after several efforts to speak, during which his jaw moves convulsively and his hands shake*),—Angh—angh—angh (*incoherent nasal sounds, leading up to the word "nothing," which is uttered through nose, with jaw half open*) Nothing—nothing—nothing— (*he takes several deep breaths, drawing them in with a rattle like a snore, and exhaling hoarsely. He gradually gets control of his jaw, closing it several times*).

Dr. H. (*taking him by the arm*),—Come sit down.

G. (*trying unsuccessfully to shake the doctor off*),—No—no—no—no no—o—o, *no—NO* (*for a second he pushes the doctor's hand away, but the doctor again takes his arm and leads him to the easy chair near left center, in a state of collapse.*)

Dr. H.,—A glass of brandy, quick.

(*Mrs. G. rushes out, right rear. The doctor leans over G. and listens to his heart. Mrs. G. returns with brandy, which the doctor gives G. In a moment the latter revives, breathing deeply. Doctor returns glass*

*partly filled with brandy to Mrs. G., who puts it on table.*)

Dr. H. (*turning to Mrs. G.*),—He is better, he will be all right in a few moments. In these sudden attacks be sure and give him a little brandy. It will be wise to keep it near at hand, for a moment's delay might cost him his life.

Mrs. G.,—Is there nothing else we can do?

Dr. H.,—No,—he will come out of this in a moment or two. But these crises are bad for him. He must be kept quiet. He needs a trained nurse.

Mrs. G.,—A woman?

Dr. H.,—No, a man. A woman would make him worse. And you must keep that maid out of his sight.

Mrs. G.,—She has been with me more than a year, and I am sure she is not to blame.

Dr. H.,—So far as she is concerned her only fault is she is a woman. She must keep away from him.

(*While the doctor and Mrs. G. are talking, G. sits for a few moments quite still, his head a little forward on his chest. Then his gestures and convulsive movements indicate returning control over himself. Two or three times while they are talking he raises his right hand in their direction as if to attract their attention, but at first makes no sound.*)

Mrs. G.,—But what is it? What is the matter with him?

Dr. H.,—It is the reaction, the collapse following sudden excitement. You should not have sent Marie to his room.

Mrs. G.,—I did not think—

Dr. H.,—From now on you must think, for yourself and for him. He is no longer responsible for what he does.

Mrs. G.,—Do you mean he is losing his mind?

Dr. H.,—No,—but his mind is losing control of his body. I may as well speak plainly, or concealment is no longer possible. Your eyes are open. You see the manner of man you have married. All his life long he has been what he is now, what he was a half hour ago with that French maid, only the animal passions, the vicious impulses which he has fostered and nurtured have been kept in subjection by an iron will, and he has presented to the world a seemingly blameless life. He has won the respect and approbation of men—who did not know him as I do. But his passions and impulses have grown stronger, with age, while his powers of resistance, his will, have grown weaker. He reached the crisis last night. Something happened which shook his self-control, which unmasked his animal nature and made it visible in all its repulsiveness.

Mrs. G. (*going close to the doctor*),—Shall I tell you what happened? He was not to blame. It was I —I—I. You say he lost control of the bad in him,—well, so did I. If he has sinned, so have I; we are both guilty. Oh, why did I ever marry?

Dr. H. (*trying to comfort her*),—Listen, my child, do not magnify any fancied fault bevond its true proportions. You yourself are on the verge of a nervous breakdown. You are not so strong as you were. Your powers of resistance are feeble. A woman in

your condition easily falls victim to temptation she readily resists when well and strong. The greatest curse of these lustful marriages between youth and age is that they sap the moral strength of the woman as well as the physical strength of the man. You—(*The doctor pauses suddenly as he sees Grantor's eyes fixed upon them.*)

G. (*slowly and with an effort. He still finds it somewhat difficult to control his jaw and the muscles of his face*),—What—what are you two talking about?

Dr. H. (*bitterly*),—About you.

G.,—Well—well—well—well—what are you saying? That I am going to die—eh—eh—eh—eh—(*he half laughs*) that I can't live, and soon she'll be free to marry, to marry the man who (*his voice strengthens and is guttural and hoarse*) last night under my very nose—I saw him, I saw him, who was he, who was he?

(*He struggles to rise, but sinks back exhausted.*)

Mrs. G. (*to the doctor*),—Go, go, leave me with him.

Dr. H. (*as he starts to go*),—Remember, if he shows signs of collapse, a little brandy, quick.

(*Doctor goes out left front.*)

G. (*raising himself*),—John—John, where's John?

Mrs. G. (*with solicitude*),—What is it you want? Can I not help you?

G.,—No—no—no. I want John.

Mrs. G.,—I will ring for him.

(*She goes to bell-push at side of room and touches it. John enters immediately, right rear. She indicates that G. wants him. He goes to G.'s side.*)

G. (*motioning for John to come nearer, and speaking slyly, cunningly, so Mrs. G. will not hear*),—Angh —here, here, here, here John.

(*The man bends over. G. puts his right hand on John's arm to raise himself a little nearer the man, and with his left he indicates entrance to library; his hand shakes*) There, there, there,—has any one been in there,—speak, speak—speak—

John (*in a low voice*),—No, sir, but the lady (*he glances about at Mrs. G.,—to see if she can hear*).

G. (*shaking John's arm*),—The lady,—the lady,—what lady, what lady,—what lady?—speak, man, speak—

John (*leaning toward him*),—The lady who was looking for her fan last night.

G. (*startled, and sinking back*),—Grace,—Grace,—here—(*he pauses suddenly, looks at John cunningly and suspiciously*) What did she want?

John,—She came to see Mrs. Grantor.

G.,—My wife, my wife, to see my wife,—well,—well, —well—well, did they go in there?

John,—No, the door was locked.

G.,—She tried,—she tried,—she tried the door?

John,—Yes, sir. I was on the inside and heard her try the door, but I had locked it and taken the key out.

G. (*laughing nasally and gutturally*),—Angh—angh —angh—so you locked the door—that's right, that's right, John. She's been there before, she knows,—she knows the way,—do you remember? angh—angh—

angh (*suddenly with suspicion*) You say the door is locked?

John (*shaking his head and replying in a low but distinct tone*),—No sir, not now.

G. (*alarmed, grasping John's arm more convulsively*),—What,—what—why isn't it locked? Did I not tell you—did I tell you?

John (*straightening up and speaking louder*),—Madam ordered me to leave the door unlocked.

G. (*peers around the man to see Mrs. G., who is standing near sofa*),—She,—she told you—(*half to himself, his fears aroused*) Why—why—why did she tell you that? (*John makes no reply. G. peers more suspiciously at Mrs. G. His jaw begins to work convulsively—then suddenly*) You may go—(*repeating quickly and giving the man a push from him*) you may go—

(*John goes out, right rear.*)

G. (*waits until John has disappeared, then eyes Mrs. G. suspiciously. At length*),—Here—here (*he beckons to her. She approaches and kneels beside his chair. He looks at her sidewise from beneath his heavy eyebrows*) What—what do you want in there? (*He puts the question in a hoarse tone.*)

Mrs. G. (*confused*),—Why, nothing, only it seemed so strange that the door should be locked.

G. (*recovering his strength and self-possession*),—Would it have seemed so strange last night if it had been locked so I could not enter.

(*She bows her head on the arm of the chair.*)

G. (*continuing*),—But it wasn't locked. You thought

you were alone, but I stood there—there—there (*he motions toward library*) and watched you, heard him make love to you,—and I did not know you. I thought it was some other fool of a husband who was being duped by his wife,—and then you dropped your mask—you dropped your mask (*his voice rises to shriller accents*).

Mrs. G.,—Listen, Robert, listen; it was the night, the ball, the music. I forgot myself. I thought I was in fairyland, a child once more. I did not mean to do wrong. I did not mean to be untrue. Oh, I have tried so hard to be faithful. I have fought so against temptations. It has been one endless battle ever since I was married (*she is speaking now with desperation, and has risen to her feet, her hands tightly clasped. The intensity of her words revives G. He leans forward to look at her*).

G.,—Battle, battle, what do you mean?

Mrs. G.,—I mean that almost every man I meet, every man we know, seems to think he can make love to me, and that I will listen because—(*she hesitates*).

G.,—Why? Why?

Mrs. G.,—Because you are so much older than I am. That is the reason. It is not because I have done anything. It is not because I have listened to them. But they talk and act as if we were not married, as if you were not my husband, and I was not your wife; as if I was living with you against the laws of God. They look at me, they talk to me as if I was a common woman who had sold herself for a price. But I didn't, I didn't. It was not your money.

I would not have married you for all the wealth in the world.

G. (*suspiciously*),—Then—why—why—did you marry me?

Mrs. G.,—Why! Because I thought I loved you for what you had done for my mother.

G. (*starting*),—For your mother!

Mrs. G.,—Yes. I married you because I believed that if she had lived she would have wished it.

G. (*half to himself*),—Your mother,—your mother. She's dead.

Mrs. G. (*approaching and kneeling by his side and speaking softly*),—Yes,—oh, you do not know what a blind faith she had in you. She used to talk to me about you until I, too, was filled with enthusiasm. Without knowing it she stirred in my heart an admiration which was the reflection of her own. I looked upon you as little less than a god. My heart would beat when I met you in the street, and when you took my hand in yours, or so much as patted my head, I trembled all over. Until just before she died I knew no greater love than the affection I felt for you, but—(*she hesitates*)

G. (*his voice is hoarse but gentler*),—Well—well—and then—.

Mrs. G. (*in a low voice*),—I met another and there came into my life a new and different feeling. I learned to love, but I would not listen to the promptings of my own heart. I was in love yet when you asked me to marry you, I said, yes.

G.,—And you loved another—

Mrs. G.,—Yes, but he was away, so far away I thought he had forgotten me.

G.,—And you married me on account of your mother?

Mrs. G.,—Yes, and do you believe me when I tell you I have tried to do what is right, that I have fought just as hard as I can, that I have struggled until—until I am tired. (*She droops her head wearily.*)

G.,—But last night—last night, in there.

Mrs. G.,—That is the fiercest struggle of all, for I am fighting against myself—

G.,—Who is he?

Mrs. G. (*moving hastily and wiping her eyes*),—No, I will not tell you. There is no need. He will go away, away again, out of my life. He knows I will not love him. I have told him so. Be patient, Robert, be patient. He will go away—very soon, and then there will be no one to come between us, no one.

G.,—But you love him still? You love him still?

Mrs. G.,—No, not the same. It is not the same. He has changed. His love is different. It is no longer sweet, and tender and pure; it is like that of the other men; it is so hot and fierce it withers and kills mine.

G.,—Who is he? who is he?—tell me.

Mrs. G.,—No.

G.,—I have a right to know.

Mrs. G.,—No, he came into my life before you asked me to be your wife. I do not ask you about the women you have known.

G.,—But he put his arms about you, he put his arms about you and kissed you—

Mrs. G.,—I could not help it. I tried as hard as I could, but he was stronger—

G. (*agitated and speaking gutturally*),—He—he—he—kissed you, there, there, before my very eyes—

Mrs. G. (*pleading*),—Will you not forgive me, Robert?

G.,—Forgive you! No, no, I tell you, no. Here in my own house, under my own roof, before my very eyes you kissed him,—forgive you, no, never, never (*he pushes her from him*).

Mrs. G. (*looking at him and speaking slowly*),—And has your own life been so free from blame you can put me away from you like that? I have confessed my fault, I have told you all. It is your turn. Who was the woman who last night in there, in the same room, begged you to return the letters she had written you, and what had she been to you?

G.,—She lies, she lies. There are no letters.

Mrs. G.,—Then you have destroyed them, for there were. How is it that she knows the most secret places in your own room, drawers I have never seen opened?

G.,—I tell you she lies,—there are no letters.

Mrs. G.,—Oh, Robert, I do not wish to know, I would like to close the doors on all those memories, on my own as well as yours. I wish to be true to you, for my own,—for my mother's sake.

G.,—Your mother, your mother,—why do you keep speaking of your mother, child? (*He looks at her and speaks more tenderly.*)

Mrs. G.,—Because she is my guardian angel. Her

spirit watches over me to keep me from doing wrong. As you were good and true to her, so I must be good and true to you. That thought helps to make me strong. You will forgive me for what I did last night, won't you Robert? You are kind and generous, you will forgive me—won't you—for her sake?

G.,—For her sake? For your mother's sake? (*He looks at her from beneath his bushy eyebrows. His head nods slowly. He pats her head tenderly.*) There, there,— we'll talk no more about it. We'll for—get it —for her sake. (*His voice sinks and he seems to speak more to himself than to her. She takes his hand and presses it to her lips. There is silence for a moment. He is thinking of the past. He again looks at her.*) You remember your mother, child?

Mrs. G.,—Remember her? Of course. It was only four years ago that she died.

G.,—Yes, yes, yes—to be sure. It seemed longer ago than that. (*He has trouble in remembering accurately.*) I thought you were only a child when she died.

Mrs. G.,—And so I was. A girl of eighteen, yet only a child at heart and in my knowledge of life, just out of school. Why, you used to come to the house and bring me boxes of candy. You see, you treated me like a child. I was only nineteen when we were married. Don't you remember? You used to call me your child wife?

G.,—Yes, yes, you were only a school-girl, while I, I was nearly sixty,—an old man, old enough to be your grandfather, child.

Mrs. G.,—But you did not seem so old to me. You seemed more like a father.

G. (*with his queer nasal laugh*),—Angh—angh—angh—whether father or grandfather I was too old to be your husband. You are still young, while I—I am an old and worn-out man. But I have tried to make you happy—I have tried—I have tried (*his voice almost breaks with emotion*).

Mrs. G.,—Yes, yes, I know, and I have been happy. I am now, if you will only forgive me and believe in me.

G. (*continuing, as though he had not heard her*),—I have given you everything you want—even the ball, the masked ball (*he passes his hand over his eyes as though trying to recall the ball. Then he looks at her from the corner of his eyes and says in a harsh voice*) that was the suggestion of the devil.

Mrs. G.,—But you did not object, Robert.

G. (*he partly loses himself in his recollections*),—No, no, no,—angh—angh—angh—I know, I know, I have been to those balls—it was the suggestion of the devil. I saw him stealing through the rooms and lurking in dark corners, whispering his damned suggestions to every woman who would listen, and then, and then, when she yielded he snatched away her mask. It was the devil's own carnival.

Mrs. G.,—We will never give another, Robert, never.

G. (*continuing without heeding her*),—And when he snatched away the masks I saw you standing there with that man—his arms about you—you, you, my wife, —who was he—who was he?

(*He is becoming excited again.*)

Mrs. G. (*putting her hand on his arm to cach him*), —There, there, Robert. You promised not to ask. We were going to forget. Don't you remember, you said we would not speak of it again. Be kind and generous to me. Help me to forget, to forget him, to forget myself. Let me be once more your child-wife. I will look up to you and worship you just as I used to in those days when you came to see us and I thought you were the dearest and best man on earth, I— (*as she is speaking, Marie has entered, right front. Mrs. G's back is toward the girl, but G. has caught sight of her. His expression changes. His features work convulsively. His jaw drops. He returns to the expression and manner of his first entrance*).

Mrs. G. (*looking at him with horror in her eyes*),— Robert,—Robert,—what is it? What is it? (*He struggles to his feet and starts toward Marie uttering the same almost incoherent nasal sounds*) Angh—angh—angh—here—here—here—here—(*Mrs. G. grasps him. He tries to shake her off to get at Marie.*)

Mrs. G. (*seeing Marie and understanding*),—Marie —it is you he wants, it is you, go (*she struggles with him*) quick—quick—my God, he is mad.

(*Marie disappears. G. collapses on sofa.*)

Mrs. G.,—Brandy, where is the brandy? (*She reaches for glass on table.*)

(*Curtain.*)

(AUTHOR'S PROOF. RETURN TO AUTHOR.)

## ACT III.

Scene,—same as in first act.

Table at left is moved a little nearer center. There is a decanter of brandy with glass on table.

No fire in grate.

Portieres in rear closely drawn. Folding doors on other side of portieres. These doors are closed. When opened they swing back in hall out of sight.

Hall when disclosed is very dimly lighted by light at left, which is not visible to audience.

Hour,—between eleven and twelve at night of same day as Act II.

As curtain rises the stage is dimly lighted by lamp on table.

(*John enters left, followed by the doctor, who has his hat in hand and is wearing his overcoat.*)

Dr. H.,—He is very restless, but I think I can safely leave for the night. Remember, at the first sign of another attack, give him half a glass of brandy. He understands, and if you leave it where he can help himself it is all right. The important thing is a little stimulant at the right moment.

John,—I understand, sir.

Dr. H.,—In the morning I will try and persuade him to have a trained nurse.

John,—A man, sir?

Dr. H.,—Of course. A woman would make him worse. And by the way, tell that French maid to keep out of his sight.

(*The doctor buttons his coat, preparatory to going.*)

JOHN (*pushes back portieres, unlocks doors behind and throws them back, disclosing dimly lighted hall*),—You can go out this way, sir.

(*The doctor goes out, rear, leaving to left in hall. John follows, leaving doors open, portieres slightly apart.*

*In a moment John returns. He carefully closes and locks doors, draws portieres. Moves a chair back into its place, arranges things to close room for night. Glances at his watch*),—Nearly twelve o'clock.

(*He goes to table, puts things in order, turns down lamp a little preparatory to blowing it out. He is leaning over lamp, blows two or three times to blow it out when Mrs. G. enters quickly at right. John pauses, surprised.*)

Mrs. G. (*nervously*),—What are you doing?

JOHN,—I was about to put the light out, ma'am.

Mrs. G.,—Has the doctor gone?

JOHN,—He has just gone.

Mrs. G.,—I wished to see him. Did he leave any directions?

JOHN,—He said he would send a nurse, a man, in the morning.

Mrs. G.,—Was that all?

JOHN,—He said that if Mr. Grantor had another attack to give him a little brandy immediately.

Mrs. G.,—Yes, yes, I understand, a little brandy. Is that brandy in that decanter?

JOHN,—Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. G.,—You may take it to his room.

JOHN,—If you please, there is some in Mr. Grantor's room, on the stand at the head of his bed.

Mrs. G.,—Very well, then leave this here. You may go.

JOHN (*hesitating*),—Shall I lock up, ma'am?

Mrs. G.,—No, Marie will see to the door.

JOHN (*perplexed what to do*),—But Mr. Grantor, ma'am, gave me orders—

Mrs. G. (*scarce listening to what he is saying*),—Never mind, you may go. I shall not need you any more tonight. As you go up, look in Mr. Grantor's room and see if he wants anything.

(*John bows and goes out, right. Mrs. G. waits until John has disappeared, then goes quickly to door at right and listens to see if he has really gone. She then goes to rear, unlocks doors and looks into hall, and listens again. She then moves softly to door at left, opens it and calls*),—Marie, Marie, (*in a loud whisper. Marie appears and after carefully closing door follows Mrs. G. toward center*).

Mrs. G.,—A gentleman may call to inquire after Mr. Grantor. I wish you to be near the door and when you hear steps, open before he rings, before he rings, do you understand?

MARIE (*in a frightened tone*),—Yes, madame.

Mrs. G.,—You will tell him Mr. Grantor is better. If he should wish to see me you can show him in here.

MARIE,—Yes, madame—

Mrs. G.,—There, now, stay close by the door so you can hear anyone come up the steps.

(*Marie goes out rear, disappearing toward left. Mrs. G. draws portieres and stands for a time with her back to portieres which she clutches together with her right hand. She looks furtively about room, then tiptoes softly in direction of table.*

*Once more she listens at the door at left. She then moves quickly to table and tries the drawer to left. It is locked. She makes a search in drawer at right for key, finds it, tries it in left drawer and opens drawer, seating herself in chair behind table, she proceeds to examine contents of drawer by the aid of the lamp, which she turns up a little. As she leans forward the light falls on her face. Taking out a package of papers and photographs, she looks at the latter one by one.*) Photographs, old, old photographs. I wonder who they are. (*She passes them one by one through her hands.*) All women he has known, women he has loved. (*Looking at one.*) This one is hardly more than a girl in her teens, curls down her back. What is she, a mere child, doing with all these women? Could it be possible—? (*She pauses, puts her hand to her mouth and thinks; then with an effort*) No, the thought is too horrible. He could not have loved them all. They may have been just friends. (*She goes on taking things out of the drawer but does not find the package of letters she is after. She comes to another photograph. Turning it over, she exclaims*) My mother! (*For a moment she looks at it, dazed; then the reaction comes and she sobs*) My mother, my mother (*with her handkerchief she wipes the dust from the photograph and kisses it again and again.*

*Then she quickly, nervously looks through what remains in drawer. She finds a thin package of letters.*) This must be the package. (*She nervously unties the string which holds the papers wrapped about them. Removes wrapper and looks at handwriting.*) My mother's handwriting! They are hers. (*She presses them to her lips, wipes her eyes with her handkerchief, which is on the table beside her.*) Written to him in those days when he was so good to us. And he has kept them all these years. (*Again she kisses them. Then hastily puts some of the things back in the drawer, including her mother's photograph. As she puts the other photographs back she says*) It doesn't matter what they were to him or he to them, he was good to her.

(*She looks at the envelope, examines postmarks, picks out one envelope from the rest.*) This is the last. It is postmarked only two months before she died. Written when we were in the White Mountains. How well I recall that last summer we spent together, how sad and sick she was. He was in New York and did not come to see us all that summer. I wonder why. Dear, sweet mother, she was so lonely and miserable that summer. I think she really wanted to see him.

(*She takes out letter and proceeds to read it*) "Oh Robert, Robert, I have not long to live, a few weeks, a month or two at most. I would not be a burden longer than the summer." Mother, a burden, what does she mean? "By autumn you would be free. Oh, I beg of you to marry me." To marry, to marry, it cannot be that she loved him (*she is almost afraid to read farther*). "You promised once, and I gave you

all a woman has to give. You promised, I believed you, I trusted you, I loved you. If you do not keep your word, that love will turn to hate. If you do not marry me I shall die cursing you—''

(*She drops the letter. The way she breathes and looks shows how profoundly she is affected at the terrible revelation. At first she is dazed and mutters*) Mother, mother, mother,—you loved him,—him—him, and he was not good to you,—(*her voice becomes fiercer*) he deceived you and you cursed him,—with your dying breath,—oh, my God, my God, and I gave myself to him; I married him because I thought he was so kind to you. (*She breaks down, drops her head on her arms on the table and sobs convulsively. After a moment or two she lifts her head, and tries to dry her eyes. She is greatly agitated. She starts, thinks she hears a sound*) What's that? (*She calls in a loud whisper*) Marie, Marie—Marie— (*No one answers. She listens, but hears nothing more. Then she rapidly returns the remaining things to the drawer. Her manner shows she is laboring under intense excitement. She is not quite herself. She gets the things back in the drawer, except her mother's letters, which she thrusts into her dress. She rises, stands and listens as if fearful some one is coming.*) I must go away. I must go away. I must leave this house tonight. (*She goes to entrance at rear and calls in loud whisper*) Marie, Marie.

(*The girl appears, and looks at her mistress in amazement.*)

Mrs. G.,—Did any one come up the steps?

Marie,—No one, madame.

Mrs. G.,—I thought I heard a sound.

Marie (*alarmed at her mistress*),—I heard nothing, madame.

Mrs. G. (*looking apprehensively toward door at left*),—I thought I heard—him—there.

Marie,—Who, madame?

Mrs. G. (*seizing girl's arm and looking intently toward same door*),—Him, (*her voice is little less than a loud whisper*) him,—listen,—(*she listens intently, Marie is frightened*) did you not hear? (*the girl shakes her head*) he moves about like a cat. Sometimes in the dead of night I hear him stirring in his room, like one who cannot sleep, like a man whose conscience will not let him rest, there—there—there—did you not hear? (*She clutches the girl's arm more tightly, and starts toward door.*)

Marie,—No, madame, I hear no one—

Mrs. G.,—I tell you he is there, listening, I will—(*she rushes to door, throws it open; there is no one there. She looks and listens, passes her hand across her forehead to clear her dazed mind, turns back in room, closing door, leans for a moment against door jamb to collect herself*) I must get out of here, out of this room, out of this house, or I shall go mad. (*Going toward girl*) My cloak, Marie, my cloak, get me my cloak.

Marie,—Your cloak, madame, but madame is not going out so late—

Mrs. G. (*half mechanically*),—So late—so late; what time is it?

Marie,—It is nearly midnight—

Mrs. G.,—Midnight,—did you say midnight? (*She gazes about wildly*) That is the hour when we all unmask. Hark! (*She listens. Very far off and muffled is heard the sound of the music of the night before. Marie does not hear it and looks at her mistress, afraid*) don't you hear the music? the waltz? It is the last dance. Come, let us go, he will be waiting. Where is he? Where is he?

MARIE (*terrified*),—Who, madame, who?

Mrs. G.,—My prince, the one, the one with whom I danced that waltz, who—(*her voice dies away. She clutches at one of the portieres with her left hand, looks out in dimly lighted hall*). The waltz, the waltz, —don't you hear it? (*Marie shakes her head and by mute gestures expresses her sympathy and her fear. Music dies away.*) And it was here we stood, here, when the horn sounded and they cried "Unmask," and there, *there,* THERE (*her voice rises as she pointed toward left by table where Grantor stood the night before*) I can see him now. (*Her hands and arms indicate the gestures he used.*)

MARIE (*frightened*),—But there is no one here, madame.

Mrs. G.,—I tell you I see him, with his bony hands outstretched, clutching the air; he tries to speak—he tries to speak—

MARIE,—Who, madame, who?

Mrs. G. (*slowly, and partly moving*),—Who?—who? —the wretch my mother cursed.

MARIE (*thoroughly alarmed at her mistress's condition*),—Oh, madame, I will call some one,—I will ring

—(*she starts toward bell which is on wall near door at left*).

Mrs. G. (*rapidly*),—No, no, no,—stop (*then more slowly as she regains control of herself*) A glass of water,—anything, there,—there, a little brandy. (*She staggers back and grasps back of sofa to steady herself. Then sinks down on sofa while Marie hurriedly pours out some brandy and brings it to her. She drinks it at a swallow, gasps and catches her breath as the fiery liquid nearly chokes her, but it revives her. Marie returns glass to table near decanter, which she leaves just beyond center of table toward center of stage.*)

Mrs. G. (*partly restored, but still weak*),—Give me my cloak—my cloak.

Marie,—Oh, madame, will you not go to bed?

Mrs. G.,—To bed, where? With whom? With him, and feel his hot, lecherous breath upon my cheek all night long? No, no, no. Never, never again will I sleep in this house of sin and death. I want to breathe the fresh, pure air of the street. I choke, I stifle here, —my cloak—quick, it is there in the hall, near the door.

(*Marie dares not disobey. She goes for the cloak and returns quickly with cloak on arm, but she puts her finger to her lips.*)

Marie,—There is some one on the steps.

Mrs. G.,—Open the door quickly, before he rings, quick.

(*Marie drops cloak on chair and hurries out. In a moment Capt. S. enters, rear. He pauses a second*

*to accustom himself to the dimly lighted room. The dim light in hall falls upon his face.*)

Mrs. G. (*going up to him and putting her arms about his neck. She speaks in a tone of relief*),—Oh, I'm so glad you have come. Put your arms about me and hold me close to you. (*He folds her close to him.*) —I—I am so afraid.

Capt. S.,—Afraid! Afraid of what?

Mrs. G.,—I don't know,—I was just afraid, that's all,—I thought I heard strange sounds. (*She looks about apprehensively.*)

Capt. S. (*trying to soothe her, and speaking in tone of conviction*),—This old house is no place for you; it is enough to drive anyone mad.

Mrs. G. (*in a whisper*),—Yes, yes, he is mad; I know it,—I know it—

Capt. S.,—Who?—of whom are you speaking? Who is mad?

Mrs. G. (*passing her hand across her forehead in bewildered manner*),—I don't know,—my head feels so heavy and I have such strange thoughts; why, once I heard the music of the ball so plainly, and I thought I saw you standing near the door waiting for me to come for the dance,—our last dance; It was all so vivid—there—there—(*very faint, far-off sound of waltz,—just a strain, then silence*) did you not hear?

Capt. S.,—No,—you are nervous, that is all. You will be better in the morning.

Mrs. G.,—Yes, in the morning. (*She turns quickly to pick up her cloak*) Come, let us go.

Capt. S. (*surprised*),—Go—go, where?

Mrs. G.,—Anywhere out of this house,—anywhere away from him.

Capt. S.,—But it is nearly midnight—

Mrs. G.,—Yes, yes, I know,—it is almost time to unmask. (*She breaks into a queer laugh*) soon we shall see and know each other as we are, but now—now—(*without finishing the incoherent words she asks in another tone*) Did you not come to take me away?

Capt. S. (*not comprehending her strange request*),—I have come to see you as I said I would.

(*She goes close to him and puts her arms about him.*)

Mrs. G.,—Yes, you have come to take me away from here, now, tonight.

Capt. S.,—To take you away, where. I do not understand.

Mrs. G.,—Anywhere to get away from this horrible house where every room has its history of sin, where every secret drawer is filled with records of vice.

(*He puts his arm about her, holds her close against his breast and tries to soothe her.*)

Capt. S.,—There, there, you are excited; what has happened? Tell me.

Mrs. G.,—Let us go, let us go. See, I have my cloak (*she starts toward chair for her cloak*) let us go.

Capt. S.,—But you cannot go out this time of night. Just think what it would mean.

Mrs. G. (*looking at him suspiciously*),—You said you loved me.

Capt. S.,—And so I do with all my heart.

Mrs. G.,—And again and again you have begged me to give myself to you.

Capt. S.,—Yes, because I love you and cannot live without you.

Mrs. G.,—Then take me tonight, now, now, I am ready to go with you.

Capt. S. (*who has no desire to tangle himself openly*),—But where could we go? We would be discovered. Your husband would know—

Mrs. G.,—I wish him to know. I wish all the world to know that I fled from him as if he was a leper.

Capt. S.,—But think of the scandal—

Mrs. G.,—Scandal, scandal, what do I care now for scandal? The scandal has been my living with him, with him all these years when people must have known he was my mother's— (*she checks herself, looks at the captain furtively, then goes close to him*) Tell me, you knew him before we were married?

Capt. S.,—Yes.

Mrs. G.,—And you knew my mother. (*The captain bows his head without replying.*) Tell me, did you ever hear,—did you ever hear that he loved my mother? (*The captain is embarrassed. He turns his face away.*)

Capt. S. (*evasively*),—One cannot put much faith in idle gossip.

Mrs. G.,—Then there was gossip, people talked and shook their heads, and may be looked askance when she passed by. Oh, mother, mother, your only sin was

love, while I—I gave myself without love. (*She breaks into sobs. He puts his arm about her and leads her towards the sofa. She goes unthinkingly and unresistingly until they reach the sofa, when she suddenly realizes he is not taking her away, that he is making love to her there. She stops, puts her hand on the back of the sofa, and resists his efforts to persuade her to sit down.*)

Mrs. G.,—What are you doing? Where are you going? I will not sit down here (*he tries to draw her to the sofa; she resists*) No, I tell you I will not.

Capt. S. (*persuasively*),—Come, Alice, come. You are nervous and excited. Rest here a moment. (*He exerts a little more force. She is compelled to yield a little.*)

Mrs. G.,—No, not here, not here, take me away, take me away, take me away, anywhere, anywhere. (*He gradually draws her toward him. He sits down and tries to draw her close beside him. He murmurs*) Come, Alice, come.

Mrs. G. (*resisting violently and breaking away*),—No, no. I tell you no. I will not sit beside you and let you put your arms about me. I will not kiss you in this house.

Capt. S. (*baffled and angry*),—Then you do not love me?

Mrs. G.,—I love you too much to desecrate our love by so much as whispering it in this horrible room.

Capt. S. (*roughly*),—Why not here as well as elsewhere? Is not this your home?

Mrs. G.,—No, it is his. I have no right here. It is the home of other women.

Capt. S.,—But last night, here in this very room, by that door, you listened to me and I kissed you.

Mrs. G. (*passing her hand over her forehead in a dazed manner*),—But last night, last night was a dream, you were a prince, and I—I was not myself, what was I?—oh, I remember, I was the sleeping princess. I was in a castle,—an old, old castle, like a dungeon. I was asleep in the shadows and in the darkness, and you came to me out of the bright and beautiful world of light, out of the realm of fairyland, and you put your arms about me, you kissed me and I awoke,—I saw you standing there (*she points toward entrance to hall*) I heard music, beautiful music—(*she pauses suddenly and turns toward hall, listening intently. The strains of the music are heard, this time not so faintly*) there, the music,—do you hear? It is our waltz, the last—the last before they all unmask. Come, come—(*she urges him toward the entrance at rear. He goes a step or two, then holds her back*) Come, come,—don't you hear the music? We shall miss the dance.

Capt. S.,—Alice, Alice (*he turns her about sharply*), —There is no music. I hear nothing. (*As she rouses herself at his words, the music suddenly ceases. She is limp and exhausted. He leads her gently to sofa and sits beside her, holding her hand in his. She looks at him through half-closed eyes, as though endeavoring to understand.*)

Mrs. G. (*slowly*),—Did you not hear?

Capt. S.,—What?

Mrs. G.,—The music, the waltz. (*She turns her head and looks toward rear, almost expecting to see maskers.*) I heard it just as plainly as if it was last night.

Capt. S.,—It is your imagination. There is not a sound, not a soul—(*there is a low moan outside at left*).

Mrs. G.,—Hark! did you not hear that?

(*Again the weird moan sounds through silent house, then all is still.*)

Capt. S. (*in hushed voice*),—It is the soughing of the wind through some vacant chamber.

Mrs. G. (*clasping his hand lightly and speaking in frightened tone*),—This house is filled with strange sounds. We are not alone. We are never alone. The people we have wronged cling to us, they follow us like shadows. We each one of us move at the head of a procession of ghosts.

Capt. S.,—You must get rid of these morbid fancies. There is no one here. We are alone, all alone. There is no one stirring, no one to see, or listen (*then pleadingly and leaning toward her*) Kiss me.

Mrs. G. (*again drawing back*),—Would you—would you have me kiss you here,—here,—in his house, in this room, where—where (*she looks about furtively*) perhaps he has made love to my mother? (*She chokes with emotion.*) It is not love, or you would not ask me.

Capt. S.,—But I tell you, Alice, I love you—

Mrs. G. (*rising suddenly*),—Then take me away. I

will kiss you, I will love you, I will live with you, die for you, only take me away.

Capt. S. (*tries to hold her in his arms, he speaks passionately*),—Yes, yes, I will take you away (*she permits him to draw her to him*), but not tonight, Alice, not tonight, my love (*she struggles to free herself. He tries to kiss her*) Listen, listen, tomorrow,—(*he holds her closer*).

Mrs. G.,—No, no, I say, no. If you kiss me, I shall hate you, hate you more than I do him (*she points upward and toward entrance at left, in direction of Grantor's room*). Let me go, let me—go—(*she struggles, but in vain. He is too strong*).

Capt. S. (*fiercely, as he draws her head back on his shoulder*),—No, no, I'll not let you go. You love me, you—love—me—(*he kisses her*) there. (*She yields as she did the night before. The faint sounds of the waltz are heard. As he releases her, she assumes a listening attitude and makes quick, strange gestures like one out of her mind.*)

Mrs. G.,—The music, the waltz,—come,—come—come (*she leads him toward the entrance, rear. He is frightened*).

Capt. S. (*in a low voice*),—Alice, Alice,—my love (*she turns toward him. She comes to herself. The music suddenly ceases. There is a look of horror in her face*).

Mrs. G. (*pushing him away from her with an exclamation of disgust*),—Ugh! go—go—go—

Capt. S. (*beseechingly*),—But Alice—

Mrs. G.,—Don't touch me,—don't touch me—or I

shall scream for help—you dropped your mask and I saw the beast in your eyes,—it is not love, it is not love, but lust. (*Then in pitiful accents*) I offered myself to you and you would not take me, because you feared the world. When I begged you to leave me alone you put forth the brute force of the man to gratify the animal in you. Go, go, go (*she holds back the portieres and points toward left in hall*).

Capt. S. (*impulsively*),—Come, Alice, come, I will take you now, tonight.

Mrs. G.,—It is too late.

Capt. S. (*seizing her*),—By heavens, I will not go without you.

Mrs. G. (*struggling*),—Marie, Marie—(*the captain draws back quickly. Mrs. G. almost hangs on portiere.*)

Mrs. G.,—Go,—go,—I hear some one coming (*she looks in direction of left entrance. Captain disappears to left in hall. Mrs. G. follows quickly into hall, draws portieres behind her, and turns and looks through toward door at left.*

*Grantor slowly opens door at left and enters with feeble steps. His hair is somewhat dishevelled. He wears slippers and has on a dressing gown which is open at the neck, showing shirt, without collar. He is haggard and very nervous, but in fairly good control of his faculties. He pauses at door, closing it carefully behind him. He looks about, but sees nothing in the dim light of the room. He steps unsteadily toward table and drops into chair with a heavy sigh. He is weak. He rests his head on his right hand for a moment or two, the light from the lamp falling full*

*on his haggard features. With his left hand he fumbles at the neck-band of his shirt aimlessly for a second, then his hand drops to his side. He breathes heavily. Mrs. G. accidentally makes a sound in hall. Rousing himself apprehensively, he makes the nasal sounds*).

G.,—Engh—engh—engh (*then peers under lamp shade toward rear entrance*) who's there—who's there? (*He listens. No sound.*) Eng—g—(*long-drawn, nasal sigh*) I thought I heard a noise (*he listens*) John—John—(*he calls, but no answer*). It must have been—the wind, the wind outside the door. Strange—I cannot sleep. But when I close my eyes I see her face. I see her eyes filled with tears,—with tears, and I hear her voice begging me to marry her,—eng-h (*he leans heavily on table. Rousing himself*) I cannot rest until her letters are destroyed. (*He turns to drawer and finds key in lock.*) The key in the drawer! Who's been here? (*he pulls drawer open*) the drawer unlocked! What—what does this mean? Who has been here? (*Again he looks about and calls*) John, John, (*no one answers*). I told him to keep this room closed. (*He takes out things hastily, nervously. He looks at the photographs.*) Photographs (*he laughs in senile fashion*) eh—eh—eh—eh—I know you,—I know you all—and there's Jeannette, the youngest of them all (*he kisses photograph. Then he stops suddenly, scratches his head and says in more matter of fact tone*) but she's dead now,—ye—e—s, she's dead now, and it's a good thing she is, it's a good thing she is, for (*more fearfully*) when she was alive she used to hang about here and ask to see me. I can see her now, with her

golden curls and the ribbon in her hair,—(*terrified at fancied vision*) I can see her—I can see her. (*He shades his eyes and looks in far corner. He pauses, strains his eyes, leaning his head down close to table and peering under lamp shade. Mrs. G. slowly parts the portieres and appears, standing quite still between the heavy hangings. He gazes at her as though fascinated for seemingly a long time, then in a hoarse whisper*) Who are you? Who are you? Speak, you are not Jeannette, for she, she was but a child. (*He grasps the table to lean further forward. Mrs. G. steps toward center.*)

Mrs. G.,—No, I am not Jeannette, but I was only a child when you first knew me.

(*As he recognizes her he sinks back in his chair with something like a sigh of relief.*)

G. (*slowly, but distinctly, though his voice shows his weakness*),—What are you doing here this hour of night?

Mrs. G. (*with forced calmness*),—I came to find a package of letters written by a woman—

G. (*with suspicion*),—What woman?

Mrs. G.,—The woman who was looking for them last night.

G. (*relieved*),—Yes, I know, I know, I know. She was here last night, looking for her fan, she said, for her fan (*he laughs, then hoarsely*) Well, they're burned, burned, burned long ago. They were not worth keeping. No, no you can tell her they are burned.

Mrs. G.,—But you did not burn all the letters in that drawer. There were some you thought worth

keeping. (*As she says this he peers at her apprehensively and pushes the drawer shut.*)

G. (*looking at her intently*),—I tell you they are burned. Every one of them burned—

Mrs. G. (*drawing letters from her bosom*),—All but these; these you kept for me.

G. (*starting*),—Those—letters! Whose letters are those?

Mrs. G.,—My mother's. (*His jaw drops a little. It is with difficulty he controls himself.*)

G.,—Where did you find them?

Mrs. G.,—There in that drawer where you keep your trophies of victims, there with photographs of women who have loved you?

G. (*recovering his self-possession and speaking slowly*),—Give me those letters.

Mrs. G. (*closping them to her bosom*),—No.

G.,—Give them to me, I say. They were not intended for you, and if you read them—(*he hesitates*).

Mrs. G.,—Well, and if I read them, what then? May not a daughter read her mother's letters?

G.,—Not those, not those. If you value your peace of mind you will give them to me unread, and I will destroy them now, here before your own eyes.

Mrs. G.,—No, never. I shall keep them so long as I live.

G.,—You have read them.

Mrs. G.,—We will read them now.

G.,—You have read them.

Mrs. G. (*speaking lightly*),—No, no, be calm, why are you so agitated? Sit down, and listen. We will read them together, you and I, for they were written to you, and by my mother. I will read them aloud to you and listening to her words learn to love you all the more for all you did for her.

(*He sinks back in his chair helpless.*)

G.,—You mock me, you mock me, you mock me.

Mrs. G. (*in feigned surprise*),—Mock, you! I, why, I only wish to read to you. You are restless, so am I. You cannot sleep, no more can I. You steal down here to revive old memories, to spend an hour with the past. Well, so will I, for when I sleep I have bad dreams like you, and I dare not close my eyes for fear of seeing things. We are alone. There is no one up in all the house but you and me, and should you call or cry aloud for help there's not a soul to hear, not a soul except the ghosts that inhabit this room, and they will laugh—they will laugh—ha—ha— (*she bends over him fiercely*). If I did not love you I could strangle you where you sit (*she almost hisses these words and moves so close to him, he sinks far down in his chair, terror-stricken. Then after a second she turns to the other side of the table, and kneels down so the light is on her face. She takes the letter she has already read, from the packet, opens it and begins reading it in a voice of forced calmness*) "Oh! Robert, Robert, I have not long to live."

G. (*interrupting, his jaw hanging, his tone strongly nasal*),—Angh—angh—stop, stop, stop, don't read that, don't read that, any but that—

Mrs. G. (*peremptorily*),—Listen. It is a dying

woman who speaks. "I have not long to live, a few weeks, a month or two at most. I would not be a burden longer than the summer. By autumn you would be free."

G. (*half to himself*),—She did not live the summer through,—I remember,—I remember—it was in August—

Mrs. G. (*continuing,*)—"Oh, I beg of you to marry me. You promised once and I gave you all a woman has to give. You promised, I believed you, I trusted you, I loved you."

G. (*rouses himself, and greatly agitated*),—Stop, my God, stop; it is your mother, your mother, child, who wrote those words. Have you no regard for your mother's memory?

Mrs. G.,—Her memory bears no stain. Her fault was the fault of love, the one great transgression that God in his infinite wisdom and mercy pardons in a woman. But my fault, my sin, a union without love, he never pardons.

G. (*sinking back and partly losing himself*),—Ang—ang—ang—you talk of God; there is no God—

Mrs. G.,—For such as you? No, no, but there is a hell, a hell on earth and a hell for all eternity. This letter is a part of your hell on earth, and this night the jaws of the hell beneath yawn for you. (*He looks at her, dumb with terror, his jaw hanging and trembling.*)

Mrs. G. (*continuing the letter*),—"If you do not keep your word, that love will turn to hate. If you do not marry me I shall die cursing you,"—cursing you, curs-

ing you—(*hysterically*). Oh, and I thought you were good to her, and I have given you my life, my youth, my body, my very soul. I have tried to love you and be true to you, and all these years you have been a devouring beast,—drinking the heart's blood of every woman who crosesd your path.

G. (*not fully realizing what he is saying*),—Well, well, she's dead, she's dead and Jeannette's dead. They're all dead.

Mrs. G. (*rising and approaching him*),—Except you and me. We are not dead. But the shadow of death is over us.

G. (*rousing a little*),—What's that you say? The shadow of death—where? where?

Mrs. G.,—There, there, in your glassy eyes, your quivering lips, your hanging jaw. Your soul is already putrefied.

G. (*struggling, terrified*),—Stop, stop (*the sounds become incoherent and guttural. He tries to reach over on table toward brandy. She watches him, fascinated*).

G. (*in his efforts to reach decanter he hoarsely calls*),—Brandy, brandy—give me—give—me—brandy—

Mrs. G. (*watching him*),—He wants the brandy—brandy—if hc does not get it he will die—die, the doctor said.

(*G. struggles agonizingly. His jaw dropping lower, his hands trembling, his eyes becoming fixed. He makes a supreme effort and reaches the decanter, which he touches and almost grasps by the neck. He is about to succeed when she reaches forward and pulls it out of his reach. She shrinks back, watching him. For a*

*moment he remains streched over the table, glaring at her. His fingers twitch in the direction of the decanter. He utters a few guttural sounds and sinks back, huddled down in a heap in the chair.*)

Mrs. G. (*stealing toward him*),—There, I have killed him, I have killed him. He is dead, he is dead. (*She puts out her hand to touch him, but draws back with a shudder and drawing her breath between her teeth with a sharp sound*) I cannot touch him. I cannot touch him. Not for the world would I touch that mass of rotten flesh. He was so vile that hell will close its gates against his clamouring soul. (*She slowly shrinks back, her eyes still fixed upon him, but with the look of madness. The clock in hall slowly strikes the hour of twelve. She starts and listens, turning toward portieres, which she throws back. Sound of waltz faintly heard.*)

Mrs. G.,—The music, the music, the last waltz (*she moves rythmically to sound of waltz*) he is waiting, there,—there,—it is midnight. We must all unmask. (*Horn faintly heard.*) The horn, the horn, Unmask! Unmask!!

(*She falls to the floor. All sounds instantly cease.*)

(*Curtain.*)

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